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THE

CHURCH OF THE FATHERS.

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D.

OF THE ORATORY.

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QC

QUÆ EST ISTA, QUÆ PROGREDITUR QUASI AURORA CONSURGENS,
TERRIBILIS UT CASTRORUM ACIES ORDINATA?

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(*Dedication of* 1840.)

TO MY DEAR AND MUCH-ADMIRED

ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD;

THE SIGHT OF WHOM

CARRIES BACK HIS FRIENDS

TO ANCIENT, HOLY, AND HAPPY TIMES.

Feb. 21, 1840.

(*Dedication of* 1857.)

TO A FRIEND,

WHO IS AS DEAR TO ME NOW,

AS WHEN HIS NAME STOOD HERE,

AND THREW LIGHT OVER MY PAGES;

WHOSE HEART IS IN GOD'S HAND,

TO BRING INTO THAT SACRED HERITAGE,

WHICH IS BOTH THE CHURCH OF THE FATHERS

AND THE HOME OF THE CHILDREN.

March 25, 1857.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS.*

THE following sketches, which, with two or three exceptions, have appeared in the *British Magazine*, during 1833 and the following years, do not, as the author is very conscious, warrant a title of such high pretension as that which was there prefixed to them, and is here preserved. But that title will at least show the object with which they were written, viz. to illustrate, as far as they go, the tone and modes of thought, the habits and manners of the early times of the Church.

The author is aware how much a work is open to imperfection, and therefore to criticism, which is made up, in so great a measure as this is, of minute historical details and of translations; nor would he subject himself either to the one or the other, did he not think that the chance of bringing out or recommending one or two of the characteristics of primitive Christianity was worth the risk of mistakes, which, after all, would but affect himself, and not his readers.

As to the translations, he is very sensible what constant and unflagging attention is requisite in

* With a few literary corrections.

all translation to catch the sense of the original, and what discrimination in the choice of English to do justice to it; and what certainty there is of shortcomings, after all. And further, over and above actual faults, variety of tastes and fluctuation of moods among readers, make it impossible so to translate as to please everyone; and, if a translator be conscious to himself, as he may well be, of viewing either his original or his version differently, according to the season or the feeling in which he takes it up, and finds that he never shall have done with correcting and altering except by an act of self-control, the more easy will it be for him to resign himself to such differences of judgment about his work as he experiences in others.

It should be considered, too, that translation in itself is, after all, but a problem; how, two languages being given, the nearest approximation may be made in the second to the expression of ideas already conveyed through the medium of the first. The problem almost starts with the assumption that something must be sacrificed; and the chief question is, what is the least sacrifice? In a balance of difficulties, one translator will aim at being critically correct, and will become obscure, cumbrous, and foreign; another will aim at being English, and will appear deficient in

scholarship. While grammatical particles are followed out, the spirit evaporates; and, while an easy flow of language is secured, new ideas are intruded, or the point of the original is lost, or the drift of the context broken.

Under these circumstances, perhaps, it is fair to lay down that, while every care must be taken against the introduction of new, or the omission of existing ideas, in the original text, yet, in a book intended for general reading, faithfulness may be considered simply to consist in expressing in English the *sense* of the original; the actual words of the latter being viewed mainly as *directions into* its sense, and scholarship being necessary in order to gain the full insight into that sense which they afford; and next, that, where something must be sacrificed, precision or intelligibility, it is better in a popular work to be understood by those who are not critics, than to be applauded by those who are.

In the translations made in this present volume this principle has been moreover taken to justify the omission of passages, and now and then the condensation of sentences, when the extract otherwise would have been too long; a studious endeavour being all along made to preserve the sense from injury.

February 21, 1840.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE THIRD EDITION, 1857.

THE volume here presented to the reader contains some of the earliest compositions of what is called the Oxford, or Tractarian, School. They are portions of a Series, which appeared in the *British Magazine* of 1833 and the following years; and they are here reprinted from the Edition of 1842, with such trivial alterations as were rendered necessary by the circumstances under which they were written.

No alterations, however, many or few, can obliterate the polemical character of a work directed originally against Protestant ideas. And this consideration must plead for certain peculiarities which it exhibits, such as its freedom in dealing with saintly persons, the gratuitous character of some of its assertions, and the liberality of many of its concessions. It must be recollected, that, in controversy, a writer grants all that he can afford to grant, and avails himself of all that he can get granted:—in other words, if he seems to admit, it is mainly "for argument's sake;" and if

he seems to assert, it is mainly as an "*argumentum ad hominem.*" As to positive statements of his own, he commits himself to as few as he can; just as a soldier on campaign takes no more baggage than is enough, and considers the conveniences of home life as only *impedimenta* in his march.

This being kept in view, it follows that, if the author of this volume allows the appearance of infirmity or error in St. Basil or St. Gregory or St. Martin, he allows it because he can afford to say "*transeat*" to allegations, which, even though they were ever so well founded, would not at all interfere with the heroic sanctity of their lives or the doctrinal authority of their words. And if he can bear to hear St. Antony called an enthusiast without protesting, it is because that hypothesis does not even tend to destroy the force of the argument against the religion of Protestants, which is suggested by the contrast existing between their spirit and his.

Nor is this the sole consideration, on which an author may be justified in the use of frankness, after the manner of Scripture, in speaking of the Saints; for their lingering imperfections surely make us love them more, without leading us to reverence them less, and act as a relief to the discouragement and despondency which may come

over those, who, in the midst of much error and sin, are striving to imitate them;—according to the saying of St. Gregory on a graver occasion, "Plus nobis Thomæ infidelitas ad fidem, quam fides credentium discipulorum profuit."

And in like manner, the dissatisfaction of Saints, of St. Basil, or again of our own St. Thomas, with the contemporary policy or conduct of the Holy See, while it is no justification of ordinary men, bishops, clergy, or laity, in feeling the same, is no reflection either on those Saints or on the Vicar of Christ. Nor is his infallibility in dogmatic decisions compromised by any personal and temporary error into which he may have fallen, in his estimate, whether of a heretic such as Pelagius, or of a Doctor of the Church such as Basil. Accidents of this nature are unavoidable in the state of being which we are allotted here below.

As to the translations which this volume contains the author is very sensible, &c. &c. (*as in first and second editions*).

Ladyday, 1857.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

In the Advertisement to the third Edition of this work, it was implied, that in that Edition, as was the case, portions only were reprinted of the series of Sketches contained in the first and second; but it was not stated what the omissions were, and why they were made. This may now be done at no great expense of words.

Omission then was made of the Chapters on St. Ambrose, on Vincent of Lerins, on Jovinian and his Companions, and on the Canons of the Apostles. Of these the Chapters on St. Ambrose were withdrawn by the author with the hope of re-writing them at some future day with care and pains less unworthy of the great Saint commemorated in them, and because one of them had already been rewritten in his Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles. The Chapter on the celebrated Treatise of Vincentius had been superseded by the extracts made from that Treatise in one of the Oxford Tracts (*Records of the Church*), and by the

Oxford Edition of the whole work. And the Chapters on Jovinian and the rest, and on the Apostolical Canons, though those on the latter subject were carefully done, were rejected on account of their controversial and antiquarian character, which made them uninteresting to the general reader.

It should be added, that, besides these omissions, the two Chapters on St. Martin were abridged and brought into one.

March 19, 1868.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS is a world of conflict, and of vicissitude amid the conflict. The Church is ever militant; sometimes she gains, sometimes she loses; and more often she is at once gaining and losing in different parts of her territory. What is ecclesiastical history but a record of the ever-doubtful fortune of the battle, though its issue is not doubtful? Scarcely are we singing *Te Deum*, when we have to turn to our *Miserere*s: scarcely are we in peace, when we are in persecution: scarcely have we gained a triumph, when we are visited by a scandal. Nay, we make progress by means of reverses; our griefs are our consolations; we lose Stephen, to gain Paul, and Matthias replaces the traitor Judas.

It is so in every age; it is so in the nineteenth century; it was so in the fourth; and about the fourth I am proposing to write. An eventful century, a drama in three acts, each marvellous in itself, each different from the other

two! The first is the history of the Roman Empire becoming Christian; the second, that of the Infallible Church of God seeming to succumb to Arianism; the third, that of countless barbarians pouring in upon both Empire and Christendom together. And, as the great convulsions of the earth involve innumerable commotions in detail and local revolutions, and each district and neighbourhood has its own story of distress and confusion, so, in the events of the social world, what is done in the camp or synod vibrates in every town and in every bishopric. From one end of the century to the other, the most momentous changes and the most startling vicissitudes took place; and the threshold of the Apostles was now darkened by messengers of ill, and now lit up with hope and thanksgiving.

So was it in the fourth century; so will it be to the end:

> Thus bad and good their several warnings give
> Of His approach, whom none may see and live.
> Faith's ear, with awful still delight,
> Counts them like minute bells by night,
> Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn;
> While to her funeral pile this aged world is borne.

However, I am attempting here, neither the

grand outlines, nor the living details of the century, but some scenes or passages which chronologically or morally belong to it. And I preface them with this allusion to the century itself, because they are thereby duly located, and receive their proper colour. And now, without more words, I shall begin my course, travelling after the sun from East to West: beginning with Greece and Asia Minor, and then visiting, in succession, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, and Gaul, where I shall come to an end.

CHAPTER I.

BASIL THE GREAT.

"And thou, O Son of Man, fear them not, neither be thou afraid of their speeches, whereas unbelievers and destroyers are with thee, and thou dwellest with scorpions. Fear not their words, neither be thou dismayed at their looks, for they are a provoking house."

As Athanasius was the great champion of the Catholic Faith, while the Arians were in the ascendant; so Basil and Gregory in the East, and Ambrose in the West, were the chief instruments of Providence in repairing and strengthening its bulwarks, by word, writing, and deed, when the fury of their assaults was spent. I am not concerned just now with the great Western luminary, Ambrose, but with Basil and Gregory. Of these two saints, one had to contend with an Arian sovereign, the other with an Arian populace; and they gained the victory, each on his own field of battle, the one with the loss of his see, the other at the sacrifice of his life. Premature death, a solitary old age, were the contrary destinies of two great saints and dear

friends; the labours of Basil were cut short, and the penances of Gregory were lengthened out. The scene of Gregory's struggle was the imperial city of Constantinople; of Basil's, the length and breadth of Asia Minor and the adjoining provinces. These countries had from the first been overrun by the heretics, and, as far as religion was concerned, were, in the middle of the fourth century, in a deplorable state of confusion. Basil's care of the churches, in that time of trouble, as that of a Missionary or Preacher, extended far beyond the limits of his own jurisdiction; for by ecclesiastical right he was only priest first, and afterwards bishop, of the church of Cæsarea, and exarch of the remote and barbarous Cappadocia, from A.D. 358 to A.D. 379.

At the former of these dates, Dianius was in possession of the see. He seems to have baptized Basil, who speaks warmly in his praise, expressing the affection and respect he felt for him, and the pleasure he took in his society; and describing him as a man remarkable for his virtue, as frank, generous, and venerable, while he was amiable and agreeable in his manners. However, he fell in with the fashion of the age,

and had for nearly twenty years sided with the court faction against Athanasius and his holy cause. Accordingly, he signed without scruple the heretical formulary of the council of Ariminum, which was presented to him A.D. 360, and in which the test of the Homoüsion, or Consubstantial, contained in the Nicene Creed, was abandoned, and the Catholic doctrine evaded under the pretence of expressing it only in terms of Scripture. Basil felt bitterly this weakness, to give it its mildest name, on the part of one he so much loved; and though he did not consider that there was a call on him for any public protest, he ceased to hold intercourse with him, nor did he come near him till two years afterwards, when Dianius sent for him to attend his death-bed, and professed solemnly his adherence to the faith of the Church.

Eusebius, the successor of Dianius, was a bishop of orthodox profession, but had little of the theological knowledge or force of character necessary for coping with the formidable heresy with which the Church was assailed. For some reason or other, perhaps from a feeling of jealousy, he manifested a coldness towards the rising theologian, who is to be the subject of

this chapter; and Basil, who was now a priest, unwilling to excite the people, or create parties in the Church, retired from the metropolitan city.

His retreat, both now and in the lifetime of Dianius, was the wild region of Pontus, where he had founded a number of monasteries, over one of which he presided. He had retired thither first about A.D. 355, the year in which the Egyptian St. Antony, the first Solitary, died, for the purposes of study and mortification; and to a mind ardent and sensitive, such as his, nothing was more welcome than such a temporary retreat from the turbulence of ecclesiastical politics. Nor was his life at this time one of inaction or solitude. On occasion of a famine in the neighbouring town and country, he converted his lands into money, to supply the wants of the people; taking upon himself particularly the charge of their children, besides relieving all who applied to him, among whom the Jews are mentioned as receiving a share in his liberality. His monasteries became, in a short time, schools of that holy teaching which had been almost banished from the sees of Asia; and it is said that he was in the practice of making a circuit of the neighbouring towns, from time to time, to preach to them the Nicene doctrine. This

indeed was a benefit which was not unfrequently rendered to the Church, in that day of apostasy, by the ascetics, according to the promise that they who have a clean heart shall see God.

"The reason," says Sozomen, "why the doctrines" of the heretics Eunomius and Apollinaris "had not any extensive success, in addition to the causes above mentioned, is, that the Solitaries of the day took part against them. For those of Syria and Cappadocia, and the neighbouring districts, firmly adhered to the creed of Nicæa. At one time, the oriental provinces, from Cilicia to Phœnicia, were near becoming Apollinarian, while those from Cilicia and the Taurus to the Hellespont and Constantinople were exposed to the heresy of Eunomius; each heresiarch having success in his own neighbourhood. And then the history of Arianism was acted over again; for the populace in those parts had that reverence for the characters and the works of the Solitaries, as to trust their doctrine as orthodox; and they shrank from those who held otherwise, as impure, for their adulterate doctrine; just as the Egyptians followed the Solitaries of Egypt and opposed the Arians."—*Hist.* vi. 27.

Basil had lived in his second retirement about three years, when the attack of the Arians upon the Church of Cæsarea, under the emperor Valens, made his loss felt, and his friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, successfully interposed his mediation between him and Eusebius. Gregory's letters are extant, and I here present them to the reader.

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"This is a time for good counsel and fortitude. We must surpass others in courage, nor suffer all our past toil and labour to be undone in a moment. Why do I write thus? Because our most gracious bishop (for such we ought to think and call Eusebius henceforth) has most amicable and kind feelings towards us, and like steel in the fire, is softened by time. I even expect that you will receive a communication from him, with pleasant words, and a summons, as he himself hinted to me, and many of his confidential friends assure me. Let us then anticipate his advances, either by our presence or by writing, or, what would be better still, by first writing and then making our appearance, lest we be hereafter worsted with disgrace, when

we might have conquered by a worsting which was honourable and dignified; which, indeed, most men expect of us. Come, then, according to my entreaty, both on this account, and for the times' sake. In truth, the heretical faction is trampling the Church under foot; some of them are already among us and are at work; others, it is said, will follow soon. Surely there is danger of their sweeping away the word of truth, unless the spirit of our Bezaleel speedily awake, that cunning master-builder of argument and doctrine. If you wish me to be present and to assist in this business, or to be the companion of your journey, I am at your service."—*Ep.* 19.

It is impossible not to be struck with Gregory's delicacy in this letter, in which he speaks as if he himself were estranged from Eusebius, as well as Basil, though he stood at the time high in his favour. His next letter is to the bishop himself, whose intentions he anticipates with equal delicacy.

GREGORY TO EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF CÆSAREA.

"I know I am addressing one who hates insincerity himself, and is especially keen in de-

tecting it in another, though cloaked in ever so artful and subtle a disguise; and indeed, I may say, if you will pardon the impertinence, I am myself averse to it, both by natural disposition and from Christian education. So I write what is uppermost on my mind, and beg you to excuse my freedom. Indeed it would be an injury to me to restrain me and bid me keep my pain to myself, as a sore festering in my heart. Proud as I am of your notice (for I am a man, as some one says before me), and of your invitations to religious consultations and meetings, yet I cannot bear your holiness's past and present slight of my most honoured brother Basil, whom I selected from the first and still possess as my friend, to live with me and study with me, and search with me into the deepest wisdom. I have no need to be dissatisfied with the opinion I have formed of him, and if I do not say more to his praise, it is lest, in enlarging on his admirable qualities, I should seem to be praising myself. Now, your favour towards me, and discountenance of him, is as if a man should stroke one's head with one hand, and with the other strike one's cheek; or decorate a house with paintings and beautify the outside, while he

was undermining its foundations. If there is any thing you will grant me, let it be this; and I trust you will, for really it is equitable. He will certainly defer to you, if you do but pay a reasonable deference to him. For myself, I shall come after him as shadows follow bodies, being small, and a lover of quiet. Miserable indeed should we be, if, while we were desirous of wisdom in other matters, and of choosing the better part, we yet thought little of that grace, which is the end of all our doctrine,—charity; especially in the case of one who is our bishop, and so eminent, as we well know, in life, in doctrine, and in the government of his diocese; for the truth must be spoken, whatever be our private feelings."—*Ep.* 20.

Great men love to be courted, and little men must not mind rebuffs. Gregory did not succeed in this first attempt with Eusebius, who seems to have been offended at his freedom; and he himself was disgusted in turn, at the Bishop's stiffness. However, the danger of the Church was too great to allow of the continuance of such feelings on either side, and Gregory had, in a little while, the satisfaction of seeing Basil at Cæsarea.

The vigorous talents of Basil soon put to rights the disorders and variances which had been the scandal of the Church of Cæsarea; and with the assistance of Gregory, he completely vanquished the Eunomian disputants, from whose subtlety the peace of the Church had principally suffered. What was of more consequence to its permanent welfare, he was successful in obliterating all the suspicions which his bishop had entertained of him, and at length gained such influence over him, that he had really the government of the see in his own hands. This was the more desirable, as Eusebius had not been regularly educated for the ministerial office, but had been called by the sudden voice of the people, as sometimes happened, to fill the episcopal chair. At length (A.D. 370) Eusebius died; and Basil, as might be expected, though not without a strong opposition, was elected, at the age of forty, to supply his place. This opposition was excited by the governing powers of the country, who might naturally be supposed to fear a man of Basil's commanding character, and who were joined by some of the bishops of the exarchate, and by an irreligious party in the city itself.

He had not been long in his see when he was brought into open collision with the civil power. The Arian Emperor, Valens, made a progress through the East, from Constantinople to Antioch, in A.D. 371, 372, with the determination of deposing the Catholic bishops in the countries which he traversed; and about the end of the former year he came to Cæsarea. The Prætorian Prefect, Modestus, travelled before him, proposing to the Bishops of the cities, which lay on his road, the alternative of communicating with the Arians, or losing their sees. He summoned Basil into his presence, in his turn, and set before him the arguments which had been already found successful with others, —that it was foolish to resist the times, and to trouble the Church about inconsiderable questions; and he promised him the prince's favour for him and his friends, if he complied. Failing by soft language, he adopted a higher tone: but he found his match. Gregory has preserved the dialogue which passed between them.

"What is the meaning of this, you Basil (said the Prefect, a bitter Arian, not deigning

to style him bishop), that you stand out against so great a prince, and are self-willed when others yield?

"BASIL. What would you? and what is my extravagance? I have not yet learned it.

"MODESTUS. Your not worshipping after the emperor's manner, when the rest of your party have given way and been overcome.

"BASIL. I have a Sovereign whose will is otherwise, nor can I bring myself to worship any creature,—I a creature of God, and commanded to be a god.

"MODESTUS. For whom do you take me?

"BASIL. For a thing of nought, while such are your commands.

"MODESTUS. Is it, then, a mere nothing for one like you to have rank like myself, and to have my fellowship?

"BASIL. You are prefect, and in noble place: I own it. Yet God's majesty is greater; and it is much for me to have your fellowship, for we are both God's creatures. But it is as great a thing to be fellow to any other of my flock, for Christianity lies not in distinction of persons, but in faith.

"The Prefect was angered at this, and rose

from his chair, and abruptly asked Basil if he did not fear his power.

"BASIL. Fear what consequences? what sufferings?

"MODESTUS. One of those many pains which a prefect can inflict.

"BASIL. Let me know them.

"MODESTUS. Confiscation, exile, tortures, death.

"BASIL. Think of some other threat. These have no influence upon me. He runs no risk of confiscation, who has nothing to lose, except these mean garments and a few books. Nor does he care for exile, who is not circumscribed by place, who does not make a home of the spot he dwells in, but everywhere a home whithersoever he be cast, or rather everywhere God's home, whose pilgrim he is and wanderer. Nor can tortures harm a frame so frail as to break under the first blow. You could but strike once, and death would be gain. It would but send me the sooner to Him for whom I live and labour, for whom I am dead rather than alive, to whom I have long been journeying.

"MODESTUS. No one yet ever spoke to Modestus with such freedom.

"BASIL. Peradventure Modestus never yet fell in with a bishop; or surely in a like trial you would have heard like language. O Prefect, in other things we are gentle, and more humble than all men living, for such is the commandment; so as not to raise our brow, I say not against 'so great a prince,' but even against one of least account. But when God's honour is at stake, we think of nothing else, looking simply to Him. Fire and the sword, beasts of prey, irons to rend the flesh, are an indulgence rather than a terror to a Christian. Therefore insult, threaten, do your worst, make the most of your power. Let the emperor be informed of my purpose. Me you gain not, you persuade not, to an impious creed, by menaces even more frightful."—*Greg.* Orat. 43.

Modestus parted with him with the respect which firmness necessarily inspires in those who witness it; and, going to the emperor, repeated the failure of his attempt. A second conversation between the bishop and the great officers of the court took place in the presence, as some suppose, of Valens himself, who had generosity enough to admire his high spirit, and to dismiss

him without punishment. Indeed, his admiration of Basil occasioned a fresh trial of the archbishop's constancy, more distressing, perhaps, than any which he had hitherto undergone. On the feast of the Epiphany, he attended, with all his court, the church where Basil offered the Holy Sacrifice, and heard his sermon. The collected air of the Bishop, the devotion of the clergy, the numbers and the attention of the congregation, and the power of their voices, fairly overcame him, and he almost fainted away. At the Offertory he made an effort to approach the altar to present his oblation; but none of the ministers of the church presenting themselves to receive it from him, his limbs again gave way, and it was only by the assistance of one of them that he was kept from falling.

It cannot be too much insisted on that the Church gains the respect of the great, not by unduly courting them, but by treating them as her children. It would be a satisfaction, however, to be able to indulge a hope that the good feelings of the emperor were more than the excitement of the moment; but his persevering persecution of the Catholics for years afterwards forbids the favourable supposition. Yet it was

not once only that he trembled before the majestic presence of the Exarch of Cæsarea. Miracles and supernatural favours are said to have been displayed. Modestus became the saint's friend; Cappadocia was secured, in great measure, from the sufferings with which the Catholics elsewhere were visited, and some of the best of the imperial lands in the neighbourhood were made over for the endowment of an hospital which Basil had founded for lepers.

CHAPTER II.

TRIALS OF BASIL.

"As a servant longeth for the shade, as an hireling looketh for the end of his work, so I also have had empty months, and wearisome nights have I numbered unto me."

On various occasions, before his episcopate, Basil had shown his care for the poor and afflicted. His sale of his lands to alleviate the miseries of a famine, has already been mentioned: he raised funds for erecting and endowing a hospital near Cæsarea, principally for lepers, whom he treated with a studious familiarity, embracing and kissing them, in order to remove the horror at their persons which their malady commonly excited. The buildings also contained accommodation for travellers, and were so extensive as to go by the name of the "New Town." Institutions such as these have been ever especially characteristic of Christianity, and St. Basil seems to have succeeded in introducing them throughout his province.

If personal suffering be the providential means of sympathising in the sufferings of others, Basil had abundant opportunities of learning this Christian grace. From his multiplied trials he may be called the Jeremiah or Job of the fourth century, though occupying the honoured place of a ruler in the Church at a time when heathen violence was over. He had a sickly constitution, to which he added the rigour of an ascetic life. He was surrounded by jealousies and dissensions at home; he was accused of heterodoxy abroad; he was insulted and roughly treated by great men; and he laboured, apparently without fruit, in the endeavour to restore unity to Christendom and stability to its Churches. If temporal afflictions work out for the saints "an exceeding weight of glory," who is higher in the kingdom of heaven than Basil?

I will first give some specimens of his private trials, reserving for the present those which more especially belong to him as bishop. As to his austerities, we know something of them from his own picture what a monk's life should be, and from Gregory's description of them. In a letter to the latter (*Ep.* 2), Basil limits the

food of his recluses to bread, water, herbs, with but one meal a day, and allows of sleep only till midnight, when they were to rise for prayer. And he says to the emperor Julian, "Cookery with us is idle; no knife is familiar with blood; our daintiest meal is vegetables with coarsest bread and vapid wine" (*Ep.* 41). Gregory, in like manner, when expecting a visit from Basil, writes to Amphilochius to send him "some fine pot-herbs, if he did not wish to find Basil hungry and cross" (*Ep.* 12). And in his account of him, after his death, he says, that "he had but one inner and one outer garment; his bed was the ground; little sleep, no bath; his food bread and salt, his drink the running stream" (*Orat.* 20). He slept in a hair-shirt, or other rough garment; the sun was his fire; and he braved the severest frosts in the severe climate of Cappadocia. Even when bishop he was supported by the continual charity of his friends. He kept nothing.

His constitution was naturally weak, or rather sickly. What his principal malady was, is told us in the following passage of his history, which furnishes at the same time another instance of the collisions in which he was

involved with the civil power. A widow of rank being importuned with a proposal of marriage from a powerful quarter, fled for refuge to the altar. St. Basil received her. This brought him into trouble with the Vicar of Pontus, whose jurisdiction extended over Cappadocia, and who in extreme indignation summoned him. When he had presented himself, the magistrate gave orders to pull off his outer garment. His inner garment, which remained, did not conceal his emaciated body. The brutal persecutor threatened to tear out his liver. Basil smiled and answered, "Thanks for your intention: where it is at present, it has been no slight annoyance." However, though it is hardly to the point here to mention it, the Vicar got the worst of it. The city rose,—Cæsarea, I suppose; the people swarmed about the court, says Gregory as bees smoked out of their home. The armourers, for which the place was famous, the weavers, nay the women, with any weapon which came to hand, with clubs, stones, firebrands, spindles, besieged the Vicar, who was only saved from immediate death by the interposition of his prisoner.

But to return: on one occasion he gives the following account of his maladiès to Eusèbius, Bishop of Samosata.

"What was my state of mind, think you, when I received your piety's letter? When I thought of the feelings which its language expressed, I was eager to fly straight to Syria; but when I thought of the bodily illness, under which I lay bound, I saw myself unequal, not only to flying, but to turning even on my bed. This is the fiftieth day of my illness, on which our beloved and excellent brother and deacon Elpidius has arrived. I am much reduced by the fever, which, failing what it might feed on, lingers in this dry flesh as in an expiring wick, and so has brought on a wasting and tedious illness. Next, my old plague, the liver, coming upon it, has kept me from taking nourishment, prevented sleep, and held me on the confines of life and death, granting just life enough to feel its inflictions. In consequence I have had recourse to the hot springs, and have availed myself of aid from medical men" (*Ep.* 138).

The fever here mentioned seems to have been an epidemic, and so far unusual; but his ordi-

nary state of health will be understood from the following letter, written to the same friend in the beginning of his illness, in which he describes the fever as almost a change for the better.

"In what state the good Isaaces has found me, he himself will best explain to you; though his tongue cannot be tragic enough to describe my sufferings, so great was my illness. Yet any one who knows me ever so little, will be able to conjecture what it was. For, if when I am called well, I am weaker even than persons who are given over, you may fancy what I was when I was thus ill. However, since disease is my natural state, it would follow (let a fever have its jest) that in this change of habit, my health became especially flourishing. But it is the scourge of the Lord which goes on increasing my pain according to my deserts; therefore I have received illness upon illness, so that now even a child may see that this shell of mine must for certain fail, unless perchance God's mercy, vouchsafing to me, in His long-suffering, time for repentance, now, as often before, extricate me from evils beyond human

cure. This shall be, as it is pleasing to Him and good for myself" (*Ep.* 136).

Eusebius seems to have been especially the confidant of his bodily sufferings. Five years before, he writes to him a similar description in answer to a similar call. "When," he says, "by God's grace and the aid of your prayers, I seemed to be somewhat recovering from my illness, and had rallied my strength, then the winter came upon me, keeping me in-doors and confining me where I was. It was, indeed, much milder than usual, yet enough to prevent, not only my travelling during it, but even my putting out my head even a little from my room" (*Ep.* 27). And nine years later than this, and three years before his death, he says, that for a time "all remaining hope of life had left him." "I cannot number," he adds, "the various affections which have befallen me, my weakness, the violence of the fever, and the bad state of my constitution" (*Ep.* 198). One especial effect of his complaints was to hinder his travelling, which, as his presence was continually needed, accounts for his frequently insisting on them. To Amphilochius, bishop of

Iconium, he writes in the same year: "The remains of my illness are sufficient to keep me from the least motion. I went in a carriage as far as the Martyrs, and had very nearly a relapse; so I am obliged to beg you to excuse me. If the matter could be put off for a few days, then, by God's grace, I will be with you, and share your counsels" (*Ep.* 202). To a friend, whom at an earlier date he was urging to visit him in his retreat, he says, "You must not answer with Diogenes to Alexander, It is no further from you to me, than from me to you. For my sickness almost makes me like a plant, confined ever to one spot; besides, to pass life in hiding I account among the first of goods" (*Ep.* 9). He elsewhere speaks of his state of health as "bodily weakness, natural to him from childhood to age, and chastening him according to the just judgment of an Allwise Governor" (*Ep.* 203). At forty-five he calls himself an old man; and by the next year he had lost his teeth. He died at the age of fifty.

Yet, in spite of his infirmities, he does not seem at all to have spared himself the fatigue of travelling. He writes to Meletius, bishop of Antioch, "Many other journeys from my own

country have engaged me. I crossed over to Pisidia, to arrange, in conjunction with the bishops there, the affairs of our Isaurian brethren. The journey to Pontus followed, Eustathius having put Dazimon into sufficient confusion, and persuaded many there to separate from my church. I went as far as my brother Peter's cottage near Neocæsarea. On my return, when I was very ill from the rains and from despondency, letters arrived forthwith from the East," &c. (*Ep.* 216).

Something of St. Basil's tone of mind is seen in the above extracts; it will be seen more fully in three letters of expostulation to friends, written under very different circumstances.

The first is a familiar letter to one who, having congratulated him on his elevation to the see of Cæsarea, was disappointed at not receiving a reply.

BASIL TO PERGAMIUS.

"I am naturally forgetful, and have had a multitude of engagements, which has increased my infirmity. If I do not remember receiving a letter from your nobleness, I still believe you sent it to me; it is impossible you should be

incorrect. Yet it is not I that am in fault, but he who did not ask for an answer. However, you now receive from me what will at once account for what is past, and have a claim on you for a reply. So, when you next write, you must not think that you are making a second beginning of our correspondence, but merely paying your debt for my present letter. For though it be an acknowledgment of what has gone before, yet being more than twice as long, it will answer the other office too. Do you observe how sharp leisure makes me? My good friend, let me beg of you not to turn, as you have done, what is a small matter, into a charge so great, that perhaps no greater baseness could be imputed to me. For a forgetfulness of friendships, and insolence engendered by power, contain in them all that is wretched. Whether it is that we do not love, as the Lord has bid us, then we have lost His image; or whether we are puffed up and gorged with vain glory and boasting, we fall into the sure condemnation of the devil. Therefore, if you have accused me advisedly, pray for my escape from the sin which you discern in my conduct; if, on the other hand, from a habit I do not under-

stand, your tongue has fallen into those words, I shall take comfort and shall tax your goodness to adduce facts in proof of it. Be sure of this, that my present annoyance has been the means of humbling me. I am not likely to forget you till I forget myself; so, for the future, do not let my engagements be considered as a proof of a bad disposition."—*Ep.* 56.

Basil's election had been very distasteful to a certain number of the bishops of his province; who, finding they could not prevent it, refused to be present at his consecration, or to hold intercourse with him. Among these was Basil's uncle, Gregory. This was more than usually distressing, inasmuch as Gregory had been more than an ordinary uncle to him. He had been closely connected with Basil's family circle, which was a sort of nursery of bishops and saints. His father, whose name also was Basil, and whose profession was that of rhetoric, was a man of landed property in Pontus and Cappadocia, and of good family, as was his wife Emmelia, Basil's mother. He numbered on the line of both his parents, high functionaries, military and civil. Nor was his

descent less illustrious in a Christian aspect. His maternal grandfather was a martyr; his father's parents had been driven to live seven years in the woods and mountains of Pontus, during the Dioclesian persecution. Basil was one of ten children; three of them lived to be bishops; four of them are saints, St. Basil himself, St. Gregory Nyssen, St. Peter, and St. Macrina, besides his mother, St. Emmelia. Another brother, Naucratius, embraced the life of a solitary, and was drowned while engaged in works of mercy. Such being the character of Basil's paternal home, a difference with Gregory, his paternal uncle, would, under any circumstances, have been painful; but it so happened that the latter had been called to take on him a father's duties towards Basil and his brothers. Their father had died when they were young, and Gregory, who was one of the bishops of Cappadocia, had superintended what remained of Basil's education. As to his mind, it had already been formed by three women, his grandmother Macrina, his mother Emmelia, and another Macrina, his elder sister.

Basil had conceived that his uncle's estrangement from him was removed; but on

his saying so, his uncle wrote to him to deny the fact. On this he wrote the following letter, which happily had the desired effect.

BASIL TO HIS UNCLE GREGORY.

"I have kept silence; must there be no end of it? Shall I bear any longer to enforce this most heavy penalty of silence against myself—neither writing nor conversing with you? Indeed, in persisting hitherto in this melancholy determination, I seem to have a right to use the prophet's words—'I have been still, and refrained myself as a woman in travail'—always anxious to see or hear from you, always for my sins disappointed. No other cause can be assigned for the present state of things, except that my estrangement from your love is certainly an infliction on me for old transgressions. Yet, even though the very naming of estrangement were not a sin, if shown towards you by whomsoever, yet certainly it were, if shown by me, to whom you have been from the first in place of a father. However, the time of my punishment has been long indeed. So I can hold no longer, and am the first to speak; beseeching you to remember both me and your-

self, who have treated me, all through my life, with a greater tenderness than relationship could claim, and to love the city which I govern for my sake, instead of alienating yourself from it on my account.

"If, therefore, there is any consolation in Christ, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of commiseration, fulfil my prayer; put an end at once to this gloom, making a beginning of a more cheerful state of things for the future, becoming yourself the guide of the others towards right, not following another towards wrong. No one's features were ever more strongly marked, than your soul is characterized with peaceableness and mildness. It becomes such an one to draw others to him, and to supply all who approach him, as it were, with the fragrant oil of his own amiableness. There may be obstacles just now; but, in a short time, the blessedness of peace will be recognized. But while our dissension gives opportunity to tale-bearers, our complaints of each other must necessarily be increasing. It is unbecoming in other parties to neglect me, but more than any, in your venerableness. Tell me if I am any where wrong, and I shall

be the better in future. But it is impossible to do so without intercourse. If, on the other hand, I have committed no offence, why am I hated? This I say by way of self-defence.

"What those churches will say for themselves, which with so little honour are partners in our dispute, I will not ask, for I have no wish to give offence by this letter, but to remove it. You are too clear-sighted for anything of this kind to escape you; and will take, and lay before others, a much more accurate view than mine can be. Indeed, you were sensible of the existing evils in the churches before I was, and have felt them more keenly, having long ago learnt of the Lord not to despise any of the least of His matters. At present, however, the mischief is not confined to one or two individuals, but whole cities and communities are partners in our misfortune. Comfort me then, either by coming to see me, or by writing, or by sending for me, or in any way you will. My own earnest wish is, that you would make your appearance in my church; so that both I and my people might be benefited by the sight and the words of your grace. This will be best, if possible; but I

shall welcome any proposition which you will make. Only, let me beg of you to give me some sure intelligence of your intention."—*Ep.* 59.

This misunderstanding he surmounted: but the following was on a far more painful matter, being not so much a misunderstanding between friends, as a real difference of religious creed, which did not admit of removal.

Eustathius had been one of the pupils of Arius at Alexandria, and was admitted into orders at Antioch by the Arians. After a time, he joined the Semi-Arian, or middle, party in Asia Minor, with whom he continued some years. On the death of the Emperor Constantius, this party lost the patronage of the court; and during the reign of Valens, a purely Arian prince, Eustathius deserted them, and, after a time, professed himself of the new Emperor's religion. Up to this date he had the friendship of Basil, as bearing about him all the marks of a zealous and honest, though erring man. He was austere in his manner of life, professed a most strict adherence to truth, and seemed not destitute of the spirit of Chris-

tian love. On occasion of his first lapsing after the death of Constantius, he carried the appearance of sincerity so far as even to betake himself to Rome for the purpose of subscribing the Catholic creed, and to acknowledge publicly his offence. Afterwards he became a bitter enemy of Basil. The following letter was written A.D. 375, about the time of the first rupture between him and Basil, and is interesting as disclosing some particulars of the early life of the latter.

BASIL IN ANSWER TO EUSTATHIUS, BISHOP OF SEBASTE.

"There is a time for silence, and a time for speaking, as the preacher says; so now, after keeping silence a sufficient time, it is seasonable to open my mouth in order to explain what is unknown. For great Job himself endured his afflictions silently a long while, manifesting his fortitude by bearing up against the heaviest afflictions. But after fulfilling that silent conflict, that continued confinement of his grief in the depth of his heart, then he opened his mouth and uttered what all know, and spoke aloud what is told us in Scripture. I too have been near three years silent, and may aspire to

the prophet's boast, being as one who heard not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus I shut up within me the pain that I felt from the calumnies heaped upon me. I expected the evil would cure itself; for I supposed that things were said against me, not from any bad feeling, but from ignorance. Now, however, that I perceive the enmity against me continues, and that the parties who manifest it show no sorrow for what they have said, nor are anxious to heal what is past, but increase their united efforts towards the same end which they originally proposed, to annoy me and injure my reputation with the brethren, silence is no longer safe.

"After long time spent in vanity, and almost the whole of my youth vanishing in the idle toil of studying that wisdom which God has made folly, when at length, roused as from a deep sleep, I gazed upon the marvellous light of Gospel truth, and discerned the unprofitableness of the wisdom taught by the perishing authorities of this world, much did I bewail my wretched life, and pray that guidance would be vouchsafed to me for an entrance into the doctrines of godliness. And above all

was it a care to me to reform my heart, which the long society of the corrupt had perverted. So when I read the Gospel, and perceived thence that the best start towards perfection was to sell my goods and share them with my indigent brethren, and altogether to be reckless of this life, and to rid my soul of all sympathy with things on earth, I earnestly desired to find some brother who had made the same choice, and who might make the passage with me over the brief waves of this life. Many did I find in Alexandria, many in the rest of Egypt, and in Palestine, in Cœle-Syria and Mesopotamia, whose abstinence and endurance I admired, and whose constancy in prayer I was amazed at; how they overcame sleep, in spite of the necessity of nature, bearing ever a high and free spirit in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, not regarding the body, nor enduring to spend any thought upon it, but living as if in flesh not their own; how they showed in deed what it is to be sojourners in this world, what it is to have our conversation in heaven. Admiring and extolling the life of these men, who could so in deed carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, I desired that I

myself, as far as I could attain, might be an imitator of them.

"With this object, finding that there were persons in my own country attempting to rival them, I deemed I had found some aid towards my own salvation, and I made what was seen the token of what was hidden. And since it is difficult to get at the secret heart of a man, I reckoned it was argument enough of humbleness to have an humble clothing; and I gave my faith to the coarse garment, and the girdle, and the untanned sandals. And when many would have dissuaded me from their converse, I would not hear of it, seeing that these men preferred an hardness of living to self-indulgence: and being taken with their extraordinary life, I was zealous in my defence of them. It followed that I would not suffer any attack upon their doctrines, though many contended that they were unsound in creed, and secretly disseminated the doctrines of their master, the founder of the now prevailing heresy. Having never myself heard such from them, I thought the report calumnious. Afterwards, when called to the government of the church, what these chosen guardians and keepers of my life turned

out to be, with their pretences to loving aid and intercourse, I say not, lest its seeming incredibility should reflect upon myself, or the belief of it should infect the hearer with misanthropy. And this, indeed, was almost my calamity, had not God's mercies quickly prevented me; for I well nigh fell into a suspicion of every one, thinking truth was nowhere to be found, being wounded in my mind by their deceitful blows. Yet for a while I kept up some sort of intercourse with them; and we had several discussions about points of dogma, and it appeared as if we really agreed. They found in me the same faith which they had heard from me before, for though I have done many things worthy of groans, yet so much I may boast in the Lord, that I never held erroneous doctrine concerning God, nor have had to change my profession. The idea of God which I had from my blessed mother, and her mother Macrina, that has ever grown within me. I did not change about, as reason unfolded, but perfected the rudiments of faith by them delivered to me.

"I am charged of blasphemy towards God, though neither former writing of mine on mat-

ters of faith, nor word of mouth uttered publicly by me without book, as usual in the churches of God, can be brought against me. Ask yourself. How often have you visited me at my monastery on the Iris, when my most religious brother, Gregory, was with me, following the same rule of life as myself! Did you then hear from me any such thing? or catch any hint of it, strong or slight? How many days did we pass together as friends, in the village opposite with my mother, and discussed subjects night and day, in which we found each other sympathize?

"A man ought to take much thought—nay, pass many sleepless nights, and seek his duty from God with many tears, ere he ventures to break up a friendship. They ground their conduct altogether on one letter, and that a doubtful one. But in reality this letter is not the cause of their separation. I am ashamed to mention the real reason; and I should not tell it now, nor indeed ever, had not their present behaviour made it necessary for the general good to publish an account of their whole design. These honest persons considered that intimacy with me would stand in the way of

their promotion; so, since they had committed themselves by a subscription to a creed which I imposed on them (not that I at that time distrusted their views, I own it, but from a wish to obviate the suspicions which most of my brethren who felt with me entertained against them), to prevent their rejection on the part of the now ascendant party, on account of this confession, they then renounced my communion: and this letter was pitched upon as a pretext for the rupture. There cannot be a clearer proof of this than the fact, that, on their disowning me, they circulated their accusations on every side, before acquainting me with them. Their charge was in the hands of others seven days before it reached me: and these persons had received it from others, and intended to send it on. I knew this at the time, from friends who sent me certain intelligence of their measures; but I determined to keep silence, till He, who brings to light the deep secrets, should make manifest their plans by the clearest and most cogent evidence."—*Ep.* 223.

Sensitive, anxious, and affectionate as Basil

appears in his letters, he had a reserve and sedateness of manner which his contemporaries sometimes attributed to pride, sometimes to timidity. Gregory Nazianzen notices the former charge, and exclaims, "Is it possible for a man to embrace lepers, abasing himself so far, and yet to be supercilious towards those who are in health? to waste his flesh with mortification, yet be swollen in soul with empty elation? to condemn the Pharisee, and to enlarge on his fall through pride, and to know that Christ descended even to a servant's form, and ate with publicans, and washed the disciples' feet, and disdained not the Cross, that He might nail to it *my* sin, and yet to soar beyond the clouds, and count no one his equal; as appears to them who are jealous of him? But I suppose it was the self-possession of his character, and composure and polish, which they named pride."—*Orat.* 43. This testimony is the stronger, as coming from one whom on one occasion, as we shall see by and by, Basil did offend, by behaviour which on the part of some moderns is alleged as the great specimen of his arrogant temper. It is certain, however, from what Gregory says, that the impu-

tation was fastened on him in his day, and the report of it was heard, perhaps believed, by Jerome in his cave at Bethlehem. Words are no safe test of actions; yet most persons, I think, will allow that the following sentences from his Homily on Humility, corroborate what Gregory says in his defence:—

"How," he asks, "shall we attain to saving humility, abandoning the deadly elevation of pride? by practising some act of humility in everything that we do, and by overlooking nothing, from an idea that we shall gain no harm from the neglect. For the soul is influenced by outward observances, and is shaped and fashioned according to its actions. Let, then, thy appearance, and garment, and gait, and sitting, and table, and bedroom, and house, and its furniture, all be directed according to lowliness. And thy speech and singing and conversation, in like manner, look towards meanness, and not exaltation. But perhaps thou art awarded the highest seat, and men observe and honour thee? Become equal to those who are in subjection; 'not lording it over the clergy,' saith scripture; be not like to rulers of this world. For whoso would be

first, him our Lord bids be servant of all. In a word, follow after humility, as one enamoured of it. Be in love with it, and it shall glorify thee. So shalt thou nobly journey on to true glory, which is among the Angels; which is with God; and Christ will acknowledge thee as His own disciple, before the Angels, and will glorify thee, if thou learn to copy His humility."—*Hom. de Humil.*

The opposite charge to which his reserve gave rise was that of timidity. It is remarkable that he himself, writing to a friend, playfully notices "the want of spirit" and "the sluggishness" of the Cappadocians, and attributes these qualities to himself. *Ep.* 48. Accordingly, after his death, the heretic Eunomius accuses the opponent of Valens and Modestus of being "a coward and craven, and skulking from the heavier labours," speaking contemptuously of his "retired cottage and his closely fastened door, and his fluttered manner on persons entering, and his voice, and look, and expression of countenance, and the other symptoms of fear." *Greg. Nyss., App.* p. 46. This malicious account may be just so far founded on truth, as to make it worth while noticing a curious difference in a

little matter which it brings out between Basil and the great Ambrose of Milan, who was a man of the world; for while the former is here represented as fastening his door, it was the peculiarity of Ambrose never to shut himself into his house, but to be accessible at all times. Philostorgius, the Arian historian, in like manner, speaks of Basil, as "superior to many in the power of discussion; but, from timidity of mind, withdrawing from public disputations." And Gregory makes several remarks on his friend, which serve to illustrate the shyness or refinement of mind complained of by these writers. The following is curious, as bringing Basil before our eyes.

"Such were the virtues of the man, such the fulness of his celebrity, that others, in order to gain reputation, copied many even of his peculiarities, nay, his bodily imperfections; I mean, for instance, his paleness, his beard, the character of his gait, his deliberateness in speaking, as being generally deep in thought, and intent on his subject; which things most of them copying ill, and indeed not understanding, turned into gloom;—moreover, the quality of his garment, and the shape of his bed, and his

mode of eating, nothing of which was studied in him, but natural and spontaneous. And you may fall in with many Basils as far as outside goes, figures in shadow; it is too much to say echoes. For echo, at least, repeats the last syllables even more clearly; but these are much farther off from Basil than they desire to be near to him. Moreover, it is no longer a common, but the greatest of honours, and with reason, to have ever happened to have been in his company, or to have shown attentions to him, or to carry the memory of anything said or done by him, playfully or in earnest, since the by-doings of this man are more precious and illustrious than what others do with labour." *Orat.* 43.

Allusion is made in these last words to Basil's playfulness. This quality his letters abundantly vindicate to him, though it is of a pensive sort. Lest the reader should go away with a more austere notion of him, I will add the following passage from St. Gregory.

"Who made himself more amiable than he to the well-conducted? or more severe when men were in sin? whose very smile was many a time

praise, whose silence a reproof, punishing the evil in a man's own conscience. If he was not full of talk, nor a jester, nor a holder forth, nor generally acceptable from being all things to all men, and showing good-nature; what then? Is not this to his praise, not his blame, among sensible men? Yet, if we ask for this, who so pleasant as he in social intercourse, as I know who have had such experience of him? Who could tell a story with more wit? who could jest so playfully? who could give a hint more delicately, so as neither to be overstrong in his rebuke, nor remiss through his gentleness?" *Orat.* 43.

Basil died on the first of January, A.D. 379, having been born in 329. He rallied before his death, and his last discourses were delivered with more strength than usual. His closing act was to ordain some of his immediate disciples. He died with the words upon his tongue, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

CHAPTER III.

LABOURS OF BASIL.

"And I said, I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength without cause, and in vain: therefore my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

THE instruments raised up by Almighty God for the accomplishment of His purposes are of two kinds, equally gifted with faith and piety, but from natural temper and talent, education, or other circumstances, differing in the means by which they promote their sacred cause. The first of these are men of acute and ready mind, with accurate knowledge of human nature, and large plans, and persuasive and attractive bearing, genial, sociable, and popular, endued with prudence, patience, instinctive tact and decision in conducting matters, as well as boldness and zeal. Such in a measure we may imagine the single-minded, the intrepid, the much-enduring Hildebrand, who, at a time when society was forming itself anew, was the saviour,

humanly speaking, of the Divine City. Such, in an earlier age, was the majestic Ambrose; such the never-wearied Athanasius. These last named luminaries of the Church came into public life early, and thus learned how to cope with the various tempers, views, and measures of the men they encountered there. Athanasius was but twenty-seven when he went with Alexander to the Nicene Council, and the year after he was Bishop of Alexandria. Ambrose was consecrated soon after the age of thirty.

Again, there is an instrument in the hand of Providence, of less elaborate and splendid workmanship, less rich in its political endowments, so to call them, yet not less beautiful in its texture, nor less precious in its material. Such is the retired and thoughtful student, who remains years and years in the solitude of a college or a monastery, chastening his soul in secret, raising it to high thought and single-minded purpose, and when at length called into active life, conducting himself with firmness, guilelessness, zeal like a flaming fire, and all the sweetness of pureness and integrity. Such an one is often unsuccessful in his own day; he is too artless to persuade, too severe to please: unskilled in the

weaknesses of human nature, unfurnished in the resources of ready wit, negligent of men's applause, unsuspicious, open-hearted, he does his work, and so leaves it; and it seems to die; but in the generation after him it lives again, and on the long run it is difficult to say, which of the two classes of men has served the cause of truth the more effectually. Such, perhaps, was Basil, who issued from the solitudes of Pontus to rule like a king, and minister like the lowest in the kingdom; yet to meet little but disappointment, and to quit life prematurely in pain and sorrow. Such was his friend, the accomplished Gregory, however different in other respects from him, who left his father's roof for an heretical city, raised a church there, and was driven back into retirement by his own people, as soon as his triumph over the false creed was secured. Such, perhaps, St. Peter Damiani in the middle age; such St. Anselm, such St. Edmund. No comparison is, of course, attempted here between the religious excellence of the two descriptions of men; each of them serves God according to the peculiar gifts given to him. If we might continue our instances by way of comparison, we should say

that St. Paul reminds us of the former, and Jeremiah of the latter.

These remarks are intended as introductory to portions of Basil's letters, on various subjects indeed, but all illustrative of the then distracted state of the Church in his part of Christendom, and of his labours, apparently fruitless at the time, in restoring to it truth and peace.

The disorders of Christendom, and especially of the East, and still more of Asia Minor, were so great in Basil's day, that a heathen spectator might have foretold the total overthrow of the Church. So violent a convulsion never has been experienced in Christendom since, not even in the times of St. Gregory the Seventh and St. Pius the Fifth; it would almost seem as if the powers of evil, foreseeing what the Kingdom of the saints would be, when once heathen persecutions ceased, were making a final effort to destroy it. In Asia Minor the Church was almost without form, "and void and empty;" religious interests were reduced, as it were, to a state of chaos, and Basil seems to have been the principle of truth and order, divinely formed, divinely raised up, for harmonising the discordant elements, and bringing them

to the unity of faith and love. However, the destined result did not show itself in his day. Valens persecuted in behalf of Arianism till the year before the saint's death; the Semi-Arians continued their schism after it: and, trying to lead them towards the truth, Basil exposed himself to calumnies both on the part of his brethren, as if favouring the prevailing heresy, and of the heretics, as if maintaining an opposite one. There were dissensions, too, existing within the Church, as well as without. I have already spoken of Basil's difference with his predecessor Eusebius, and of a party which his uncle joined, which was formed against him on his succeeding to the See. Jealousies or suspicions, of which he was the subject, extended throughout his exarchate. He seems to have had authority, more or less defined, over the whole of the country which the Romans called Pontus, which was more than half of Asia Minor, and comprised in it eleven provinces. Ancyra, Neocæsarea, Tyana, among other principal sees, acknowledged him more or less as their ecclesiastical superior. Now we have records of his being opposed by the bishops of each of these cities. When he passed

out of his own district into the neighbouring jurisdiction of Antioch, he found that metropolis distracted by schism; four bishops in the see at once, two heretical, a third acknowledged by Rome and the Alexandrians, a fourth in communion with himself. When he went on to the South and West, and negociated with Alexandria and Rome for the settlement of these disorders, he met with nothing but disappointment, though saints were upon the ecclesiastical thrones of either city. Such is the history of his episcopate, — for which he exchanged his sweet monastic life.

As to the party of bishops who withstood his election, he overcame most of them in the course of a few years, as he did his uncle, by firmness and kindness, though for a time they gave him trouble. "Our friends," he says to Eusebius of Samosata, shortly after his elevation, "have not shown themselves at all better than we expected. They made their appearance immediately you were gone, and said and did many disagreeable things; and at length departed, confirming their schism with us." *Ep.* 20. Three years afterwards he complains to the same friend of the impediments which

their conduct threw in the way of his exertions for the Church. "That you may not suppose," he says, "that the interests of the Churches are betrayed to our enemies by my negligence, I would have your reverence know, that the bishops in communion with me, whether from disinclination, or from continued suspicion of me and want of frankness, or from that opposition to right measures, which the devil engenders, refuse to act with me. In profession, indeed, the greater number of us are all together, including the excellent Bosporius; but in truth in not one even of the most important matters do they act with me. The despondency which this occasions is the principal cause why I do not get well, indisposition returning to me continually from excessive grief. What can I do by myself? the canons, as you yourself know, do not permit one man to put them in force. Yet what remedy have I not tried? What rule is there to which I have not called their attention, by letter or in conversation? For they came up into town on the news of my death; and, when it pleased God that they found me alive, I represented to them what was reasonable. And they defer to me when

present, and promise all that is reasonable; but when they have gone away, they recur to their own opinion."—*Ep.* 141.

Among the injuries which Eustathius inflicted upon Basil, was his spreading a report that Basil was a follower of the heresiarch Apollinaris. This calumny, which is alluded to in the letter which he wrote in his own defence, which I have quoted in the foregoing chapter, seems to have reached and been believed by the bishop of Ancyra, by name Athanasius; who having been once an Arian, had since conformed, and shown a good deal of zeal for the true faith. This bishop said some very harsh things of Basil in consequence; which led the latter, who had an esteem for him, to write him the following letter:—

BASIL TO ATHANASIUS BISHOP OF ANCYRA.

"I am told by persons who come to me from Ancyra, and that by many more than I can number, and all saying the same thing, that you, dear friend (how may I use mild terms?), have not the kindest recollections of me, nor feel in the way natural to you. For myself, nothing that can happen astonishes me,

be sure of that; there is no one at all whose change would contradict my expectation, since I have long learned the weakness of human nature and its proneness to turn right round. Hence I think it no great matter, though my cause has fallen back, and for the honour which I had, calumny and slight are my present portion. But this is what seems to me so very strange and preternatural, that you should be the man to be angry or incensed with me; nay, and to use threats against me, as those say who heard them. Now, as to the threats, I must speak frankly, I plainly laughed at them. Indeed, I should be a very child to fear such bugbears. But what is a real cause of apprehension to me, and of much anxiety, is, that an accurate judgment, such as yours, — which I believed was preserved for the comfort of the Churches, both as a rare foundation of orthodoxy and a seed of ancient and genuine love, —that it should so far yield to the existing state of things, as to trust the calumnies of chance-comers more than your long experience of myself, and to be carried away without evidence, to such extravagant suspicions. Yet why do I say suspicions? for a person who was indignant,

and who threatened, as they report of you, seems to have manifested the anger, not of suspicion, but of clear and unanswerable conviction.

"But as I have said, I ascribe it all to the times; for what was the trouble, excellent man, in your (as it were) talking with me confidentially in a short letter, on the matters you wished to speak about? or, if you did not like to trust such things to writing, why not send for me? But if it was altogether necessary to speak out, and the impetuosity of anger left no time for delay, at any rate you might have made use of some intimate friend, who could keep a secret, to convey your message to us. But, as the case stands, who has come to you on any business, whose ears have not been filled with the charge, that I am writing and putting together certain mischievous things? For this was your very word, as accurate reporters say. I have thought a good deal on the subject, but am in as great difficulty as ever. It has come into my mind to think whether some heretic, maliciously giving my name to his own writing, has not distressed your orthodoxy, and led you to utter that speech. You yourself may free me from my perplexity, if you would kindly

state, without reserve, what has induced you to take such offence at me."—*Ep.* 25.

Another achievement of the same Eustathius was the separation of a portion of the coast of Pontus from the Church of Cæsarea, on the pretence that its Bishops were in heresy, which for a time caused Basil great despondency, as if he were being left solitary in all Christendom, without communion with other places. With the advice of the bishops of Cappadocia, he addressed an expostulation to these separatists; a portion of which runs as follows:—

"Up to this day I live in much affliction and grief, having the feeling present before me, that you are wanting to me. For when God tells me,—who took on Him His sojourn in the flesh for the very purpose that, by patterns of duty, He might regulate our life, and might by His own voice announce to us the Gospel of the kingdom,—when He says, 'By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another,' and whereas the Lord left His own peace to His disciples as a farewell gift, when about to complete the dispensation in the flesh, saying, 'Peace I leave with you,

My peace I give you,' I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ. I have waited a long while for the chance of your love paying us a visit. For ye are not ignorant that we, being exposed on all sides, as rocks running out into the sea, sustain the fury of the heretical waves, which, because they break around us, do not cover the district behind us. I say 'we,' in order to refer it, not to human power, but to the grace of God, who, by the weakness of men shows His power, as says the prophet, in the person of the Lord, 'Will ye not fear me, who have placed the sand as a boundary to the sea?'—for by the weakest and most contemptible of all things, the sand, the Mighty One has bounded the great and full sea. Since, then, this is our position, it became your love to be frequent in sending true brothers to visit us who labour with the storm, and more frequently letters of love, partly to confirm our courage, partly to correct any mistake of ours. For we confess that we are liable to numberless mistakes, being men, and living in the flesh.

"Let not this consideration influence you,—'We dwell on the sea, we are exempt from the sufferings of the generality, we need no succour from others; so what is the good to us of foreign communion?' For the same Lord who divided the islands from the continent by the sea, bound the island Christians to the continental by love. Nothing, brethren, separates us from each other, but deliberate estrangement. We have one Lord, one faith, the same hope. The hands need each other; the feet steady each other. The eyes possess their clear apprehension from agreement. We, for our part, confess our own weakness, and we seek your fellow-feeling. For we are assured, that though ye are not present in body, yet by the aid of prayer, ye will do us much benefit in these most critical times. It is neither decorous before men, nor pleasing to God, that you should make avowals which not even the Gentiles adopt, which know not God. Even they, as we hear, though the country they live in be sufficient for all things, yet, on account of the uncertainty of the future, make much of alliances with each other, and seek mutual intercourse as being advantageous to them. Yet we,—the sons of fathers, who have

decreed, that by brief notes the proofs of communion should be carried about from one end of the earth to the other, and that all should be citizens and familiars with all,—we now sever ourselves from the whole world, and are neither ashamed at our solitariness, nor shudder that on us is fallen the fearful prophecy of the Lord, 'Because of lawlessness abounding, the love of the many shall wax cold.'"—*Ep.* 203.

It does not appear what success attended this appeal; difficulties of a similar but more painful nature, which occurred at the same time, hide from us the sequel of the history. I allude to the alienation from him of the Church of Neocæsarea, a place dear to Basil, as having been his residence in youth, the home of many of his relations, and the see of St. Gregory, the Wonder-worker, in the third century, from whom, through his father's family, Basil had especially received his traditions of Christian truth. There seems to have been in high quarters there a lurking attachment to Sabellian doctrine. Sabellianism is the opposite extreme to Arianism; and its upholders would call Basil Arian, first because he was Catholic, and not

Sabellian, as is the way with the partisans of extremes; and next because he had Semi-Arian friends. This was one chief cause of the opposition shown to him; but there were other causes unknown. It is remarkable that the coolness began in the episcopate of Musonius, though he was a man whom Basil mentions with much respect and gratitude. He thus speaks of him, on his death, in a letter of condolement addressed to the Neocæsareans. This was before Basil's elevation to the episcopate.

"A man is gone, undeniably preëminent among his contemporaries for all earthly endowments, the bulwark of his country, the ornament of the Churches, a pillar and ground of the truth, the firm stay of faith in Christ, a protection to his friends, invincible by his adversaries, a guardian of the rules of the Fathers, a foe to innovation; exemplifying in himself the Church's primitive fashion, moulding the form of the Church, committed to him, after its ancient constitution, as after some sacred image, so that those who lived with him seemed to have lived with those who have been luminaries in it for two hundred years and more." He adds, "I would have you aware, that if

this blessed man did not concur with me in the pacification of the Churches, on account of certain previous views, as he avowed to me, yet (as God knows, and men know who have had experience of me) at least I omitted no opportunity of fellowship of sentiment with him, and of inviting his assistance in the struggle against heretics."—*Ep.* 28.

But to return: if Basil's Semi-Arian acquaintances brought suspicion upon himself in the eyes of Catholic believers, much more, I say, would they be obnoxious to persons attached, as certain Neocæsareans were, to the Sabellian party, who were in the opposite extreme to the Semi-Arians, and their especial enemies in those times. It is not wonderful, then, that, some years after, he had to write to the Church in question in a strain like the following:—

"There has been a long silence on both sides, revered and well-beloved brethren, just as if there were angry feelings between us. Yet who is there so sullen and implacable towards the party which has injured him, as to lengthen out the resentment which has begun in disgust, through almost a whole life of man? This is

happening in our case, though no just occasion of estrangement exists, as far as I myself know, but on the contrary, there being, from the first, many strong reasons for the closest friendship and unity. The greatest and first is this, our Lord's command, who pointedly says: 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Next, if it tend much towards intimacy to have the same teachers, there are to you and to me the same teachers of God's mysteries and spiritual Fathers, who from the beginning were the founders of your Church. I mean the great Gregory, and all who, succeeding in order to the throne of your episcopate, like stars rising one after another, have tracked the same course, so as to leave the tokens of the heavenly polity most clear to all who have desire for them. Why is it, then, O venerable among cities, for through you I address the whole city, that no courteous writing comes from you, no welcome voice, but your ears are open to those who aim at slander? What say I, brethren? not that I am a sinless man; not that my life is not full of numberless faults. I know myself; and indeed I cease not my tears by reason of my sins, if by any means

I may be able to appease my God, and to escape the punishment threatened against them. But this I say: let him who judges me, search for motes in my eye, if he can say that his own is clear. And in a word, brethren, if my offences admit of cure, why does not such a one obey the Doctor of the Churches, saying, 'Reprove, rebuke, exhort'? If, on the other hand, my iniquity be past cure, why does he not withstand me to the face, and by publishing my transgressions, deliver the Churches from the mischief which I bring on them? There are bishops; let appeal be made to them. There is a clergy in each of God's dioceses; let the most eminent be assembled. Let whoso will, speak freely, that I may have to deal with a charge, not a slander. If the fault be in a point of faith, let the document be pointed out to me. Again let a fair and impartial inquiry be appointed. Let the accusation be read; let it be brought to the test, whether it does not arise from ignorance in the accuser, not from blame in the matter of the writing. For right things often seem otherwise to those who are deficient in accurate judgment. Equal weights seem unequal, when the arms of the balance are of different sizes. Let no one sup-

'pose I am making excuses to evade the charge. It is put into your hands, dearest brethren, to investigate for yourselves the points alleged against me. If there be anything you do not understand, put questions to me through your appointed persons, who will do justice to me; or ask of me explanations in writing. And take all kinds of pains, that nothing may be left unsifted.

"What clearer evidence can there be of my faith, than that I was brought up by my grandmother, blessed woman! who came from you? I mean the celebrated Macrina, who taught me the words of the most blessed Gregory; which, as far as memory had preserved down to her day, she cherished herself, while she fashioned and formed me, while yet a child, upon the doctrines of piety. And when I gained the capacity of thought, my reason being matured by full age, I travelled over much sea and land, and whomever I found walking in the rule of religious faith as delivered to us, those I set down as fathers.

"The fair thing would be to judge of me, not from one or two who do not walk uprightly in the truth, but from the multitude of bishops throughout the world, united with me through

the grace of the Lord. Make inquiry of Pisidians, Lycaonians, Isaurians, Phrygians of both provinces, Armenians your neighbours, Macedonians, Achæans, Illyrians, Gauls, Spaniards, the whole of Italy, Sicilians, Africans, the healthy part of Egypt, whatever is left of Syria; all of whom send letters to me, and in turn receive them from me. Whoso shuns communion with me, he, it cannot escape your accuracy, cuts himself off from the whole Church. Look round about, brethren, with whom do *you* hold communion? if you will not receive it from me, who remains to acknowledge you? Do not reduce me to the necessity of counselling anything unpleasant concerning a Church so dear to me. Ask your fathers, and they will tell you that, though our districts were divided in position, yet in mind they were one, and were governed by one sentiment. Intercourse of the people was frequent; frequent the visits of the clergy; the pastors, too, had such mutual affection, that each used the other as teacher and guide in things pertaining to the Lord."—*Ep.* 204.

No good could come of these expostulations,

however sincere and affectionate, when there was an heretical spirit at work at bottom. But now let us turn from the North to the South, from Basil's own neighbourhood to foreign Churches, from the small Sabellian party at home, to the extended Arian confederation abroad. We shall find fresh trials befalling Basil. Arianism, indeed, itself, in spite of the patronage of Valens, languished and gave tokens of dying a natural death; but its disputants had raised questions which perplexed numbers whom they did not draw over; till at length the sacred subject in controversy was so clouded and confused by explanations, refinements, and distinctions, that there seemed no chance of Christians ever becoming unanimous in the orthodox creed. The particular party labouring under this mistiness of theological opinions at that day were called Semi-Arians, or Macedonians, for reasons it is not necessary here to detail. They were zealous opponents of the Arians, though originating from among them; and, after the death of Constantius (A.D. 361), they showed a disposition to come back to the Catholics. A union was partially effected, but matters were still in an unsatisfactory state

on Basil's elevation (A.D. 371), when he wrote the following letter concerning them to the great Athanasius, then on the point of removal from the Church below:—

BASIL TO ATHANASIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

"I suppose there is no one feels such pain at the present condition, or rather want of condition of the Churches, as your Grace; comparing, as you naturally must, the present with the past, and considering the difference between the two, and the certainty there is, if the evil proceeds at its present pace, that in a short time the Churches will altogether lose their existing constitution. I have often thought with myself, if the corruption of the Churches seems so sad to me, what must be the feelings of one who has witnessed their former stability and unanimity in the faith. And as your Perfectness has more abundant grief, so one must suppose you have greater anxiety for their welfare. For myself, I have been long of opinion, according to my imperfect understanding of ecclesiastical matters, that there was one way of succouring our Churches — viz., the coöperation of the bishops of the West. If they would but show, as

regards our part of Christendom, the zeal which they manifested in the case of one or two heretics among themselves, there would be some chance of benefit to our common interests; the civil power would be persuaded by the argument derived from numbers, and the people in each place would follow their lead without hesitation. Now there is no one more able to accomplish this than yourself, from sagacity in counsel, and energy in action, and sympathy for the troubles of the brethren, and the reverence felt by the West for your hoary head. Most Reverend Father, leave the world some memorial worthy of your former deeds. Crown your former numberless combats for religion with this one additional achievement. Send to the bishops of the West, from your Holy Church, men powerful in sound doctrine: relate to them our present calamities; suggest to them the mode of relieving us. Be a Samuel to the Churches; condole with flocks harassed by war; offer prayers of peace; ask grace of the Lord, that He may give some token of peace to the Churches. I know letters are but feeble instruments to persuade so great a thing; but while you have no need to be urged on by others, any more than generous combat-

ants by the acclamation of boys, I, on the other hand, am not as if lecturing the ignorant, but adding speed to the earnest.

"As to the remaining matters of the East, you would perhaps wish the assistance of others, and think it necessary to wait for the arrival of the Western bishops. However, there is one Church, the prosperity of which depends entirely on yourself—Antioch. It is in your power so to manage the one party, and to moderate the other, as at length to restore strength to the Church by their union. You know, better than anyone can tell you, that, as is seen in the prescriptions of wise physicians, it is necessary to begin with treating the more vital matters. Now what can be more vital to Christendom than the welfare of Antioch? If we could but settle the differences there, the head being restored, the whole body would regain health."—*Ep.* 66.

I have already observed, that there were two orthodox bishops at Antioch, one of the original succession, the other of the Arian, who had conformed. At the period under review, the Eastern bishops, and Basil among them, had bound themselves in communion with the bishop of

the Arian stock; whereas Athanasius, as well as the Western Churches, were, from the very first, on terms of friendship and intercourse with the representative of the original line. In this letter, then, Basil invites Athanasius to what was, in fact, impossible, even to the influence and talents of the great primate of Egypt; for, having recognised one side in dispute, he could not mediate between them. Nothing, then, came of the application.

Basil next addressed himself to the Western Churches. A letter is extant, which is seemingly written to the then Pope, Damasus, on the affairs of the East. "What," he says, "can be more pleasant than to see persons who are so far disjoined by place, yet, by the union of love, connected into harmony of members in the body of Christ? Nearly the whole East, most reverend Father, by which I mean the country from Illyricum to Egypt, labours under a heavy storm and surge. We have been in expectation of a visitation from your tender compassion, as the one remedy of these evils. Your extraordinary love has in past time ever charmed our souls, and they were encouraged for a while by the glad report that we were to have some visitation

on your part. Send persons like-minded with us, either to reconcile the parties at variance, or to bring the Churches of God to unity, or at least to give you a clearer understanding of the authors of the confusion: so that you may be clear in future with whom it is fitting to hold communion. We are pressing for nothing at all new, but what was customary with the other blessed and divinely-favoured men of old time, and especially with you. We know, from the memory of former times, as we learn on questioning our fathers, and from documents which we still preserve, that Dionysius,* that most blessed bishop, who was eminent with you for orthodoxy and other virtues, visited by letter our Church of Cæsarea, and consoled by letter our fathers, and sent persons to ransom the brotherhood from captivity."—*Ep.* 70.

He next addressed the Western bishops generally, in two letters, which give a most painful account of the state of the East.

BASIL TO HIS HOLY BRETHREN, THE BISHOPS OF THE WEST.

"The merciful God, who ever joins comfort

* Pope, about A.D. 260.

to affliction, has lately given me some consolation amid my sorrows, in the letters which our most reverend Father, Athanasius, has transmitted to us from your Holinesses. Our afflictions are well known without my telling; the sound of them has now gone forth over all Christendom. The dogmas of the fathers are despised; apostolical traditions are set at nought; the discoveries of innovators hold sway in the Churches. Men have learned to be speculatists instead of theologians. The wisdom of the world has the place of honour, having dispossessed the glorying in the Cross. The pastors are driven away, grievous wolves are brought in instead, and plunder the flock of Christ. Houses of prayer are destitute of preachers; the deserts are full of mourners: the old sorrow, comparing what is with what was; more pitiable the young, as not knowing what they are deprived of. What has been said is sufficient to kindle the sympathy of those who are taught in the love of Christ, yet, compared with the facts, it is far from reaching their gravity."—*Ep.* 90.

In the second letter, addressed to the bishops of Italy and Gaul, he says:—

"The danger is not confined to one Church; not two or three only have fallen in with this heavy tempest. Almost from the borders of Illyricum down to the Thebais, this evil of heresy spreads itself. The doctrines of godliness are overturned; the rules of the Church are in confusion; the ambition of the unprincipled seizes upon places of authority; and the chief seat is now openly proposed as a reward for impiety; so that he whose blasphemies are the more shocking, is more eligible for the oversight of the people. Priestly gravity has perished; there are none left to feed the Lord's flock with knowledge; ambitious men are ever spending in purposes of self-indulgence and bribery, possessions which they hold in trust for the poor. The accurate observance of the canons is no more; there is no restraint upon sin. Unbelievers laugh at what they see, and the weak are unsettled; faith is doubtful, ignorance is poured over their souls, because the adulterators of the word in wickedness imitate the truth. Religious people keep silence; but every blaspheming tongue is let loose. Sacred things are profaned; those of the laity who are sound in faith avoid the places of worship, as schools of impiety, and

raise their hands in solitude with groans and tears to the Lord in heaven.

"While, then, any Christians seem yet to be standing, hasten to us; hasten then to us, our own brothers; yea, we beseech you. Stretch out your hands, and raise us from our knees, suffer not the half of the world to be swallowed up by error; nor faith to be extinguished in the countries whence it first shone forth. What is most melancholy of all, even the portion among us which seems to be sound, is divided in itself, so that calamities beset us like those which came upon Jerusalem when it was besieged."—*Ep.* 92.

Elsewhere Basil says: "The name of the episcopate has at length belonged to wretched men, the slaves of slaves, none of the servants of God choosing to make himself their rivals, none but the abandoned."—*Ep.* 239. His friend Gregory gives us, in various parts of his works, the very same account of the Eastern Church in his day. "At this time," he says, "the most holy Order is like to become the most contemptible portion of all that is ours. For the chief seat is gained by evil-doing more than

by virtue; and the sees belong not to the more worthy, but to the more powerful. A ruler is easily found, without effort, who is but recent in point of reputation, sown and sprung up all at once, as fable speaks of giants. We make saints in a day, and we bid men have wisdom who have not learned it, nor have brought beforehand anything to their Order, over and above the will to rise to it."—*Orat.* 43.

The letters addressed to the bishops of the West, which have already been reviewed, were written in 372. In the course of three years, Basil's tone changes about his brethren there: he had cause to be dissatisfied with them, and above all with Pope Damasus, who, as he thought, showed little zeal for the welfare of the East. Basil's discontent is expressed in various letters. For instance, a fresh envoy was needed for the Roman mission; and he had thoughts of engaging in it his brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa. "But," he says, "I see no persons who can go with him, and I feel that he is altogether inexperienced in ecclesiastical matters; and that, though a candid person would both value and improve his acquaintance, yet

when a man is high and haughty, and sits aloft, and is, in consequence, unable to hear such as speak truth to him from the earth, what good can come for the common weal, from his intercourse with one who is not of the temper to give in to low flattery?"—*Ep.* 215. It is observable and curious, that he who was unjustly accused by saints of pride, falls into a like injustice of accusing another saint of pride himself. In another letter, he says to his friend Eusebius, "The saying of Diomede suggests itself as applicable, 'I would thou hadst not begged, for haughty is that man.' For, in truth, an elated mind, if courted, is sure to become only still more contemptuous. Besides, if the Lord be entreated, what need we more? but if God's wrath remain, what succour lies for us in Western supercilliousness?* They neither know nor bear to learn the true state of things, but, preoccupied by false suspicions, they are now doing just what they did before in the case of Marcellus, when they quarrelled with those who told them the truth, and by their measures strengthened the heresy. As to myself, I had in mind

* τῆς δυτικῆς ὀφρύος.

to write to their chief, putting aside form,—nothing, indeed, ecclesiastical, but just so much as to insinuate, that they do not know our real state, nor go the way to learn it; and to write generally, concerning the impropriety of pressing upon those who are humbled by temptations, or of considering haughtiness as dignity, a sin which is, by itself, sufficient to make God our enemy."—*Ep.* 239.

Though he began to despair of aid from the West, he did not less need it. By the year 376 matters had got worse in the East, and in spite of his dissatisfaction, he was induced to make a fresh application to his distant brethren. His main object was to reconcile the East and West together, whereas the latter, so far from supporting the Catholics of Asia against the Arians, had been led to acknowledge a separate communion at Antioch,—almost to introduce a fresh succession,—and had thereby indirectly thrown suspicion upon the orthodoxy of Basil and his friends. "Why," he expostulates, "has no writing of consolation been sent to us, no invitation of the brethren, nor any other of those attentions which are due to us from the law of love? This is the

thirteenth year since the heretical war rose against us, during which more afflictions have come on the Churches, than are remembered since Christ's Gospel was preached. Matters have come to this:—the people have left their houses of prayer, and assemble in deserts; a pitiable sight, women and children, old men and others infirm, wretchedly faring in the open air amid the most profuse rains, and snow-storms, and winds, and frost of winter; and again in summer under a scorching sun. To this they submit, because they will not have part in the wicked Arian leaven."—*Ep.* 342. He repeats this miserable description in another letter, addressed about the same time specially to the bishops of Italy and Gaul. "Only one offence is now vigorously punished, an accurate observance of our fathers' traditions. For this cause the pious are driven from their countries and transported into the deserts. The iniquitous judges have no reverence for the hoary head, nor for pious abstinence, nor for a Gospel life continued from youth to age. The people are in lamentation; in continual tears at home and abroad; condoling in each other's sufferings. Not a heart so stony but at a father's loss must

feel bereavement. There is a cry in the city, a cry in the country, in the roads, in the deserts; one pitiable voice of all, uttering melancholy things. Joy and spiritual cheerfulness are no more; our feasts are turned into mourning; our houses of prayer are shut up; our altars deprived of the spiritual worship. No longer are there Christians assembling, teachers presiding, saving instructions, celebrations, hymns by night, or that blessed exultation of souls, which arises from communion and fellowship of spiritual gifts. Lament for us; that the Only-begotten is blasphemed, and there is no one to protest; the Holy Spirit is set at nought, and he who could refute, is an exile. Polytheism has got possession. They have among them a great God and a lesser; 'Son' is considered not to denote nature, but to be a title of honour. The Holy Spirit does not complete the Trinity, nor partake in the Divine and Blessed Nature, but, as if one among creatures, is carelessly and idly added to Father and Son. The ears of the simple are led astray, and have become accustomed to heretical profaneness. The infants of the Church are fed on the words of impiety. For what can they do? Baptisms are in Arian hands; the

care of travellers; visitation of the sick; consolation of mourners; succour of the distressed; helps of all sorts; administration of the mysteries; which all, being performed by them, become a bond to the people to be on a good understanding with them; so that in a little while, even though liberty be granted to us, no hope will remain that they, who are encompassed by so lasting a deceit, should be brought back again to the acknowledgment of the truth."—*Ep.* 243.

I will add one letter more; written several years before these last; and addressed to Evagrius, a priest of Antioch, who had taken part in Basil's negotiations with Rome, and had expressed an intention, which he did not fulfil, of communicating with Meletius, the bishop of Antioch, whom Basil and the East acknowledged. The letter insinuates the same charges against the Western bishops, which we have seen him afterwards expressing with freedom.

BASIL TO EVAGRIUS, PRESBYTER.

"So far from being impatient at the length of your letter, I assure you I thought it even short, from the pleasure it gave me in reading

it. For is there anything more pleasing than the idea of peace? Or, is anything more suitable to the sacred office, or more acceptable to the Lord, than to take measures for effecting it? May you have the reward of the peace-maker, since so blessed an office has been the object of your good desires and efforts. At the same time, believe me, my revered friend, I will yield to none in my earnest wish and prayer to see the day when those who are one in sentiment shall all fill the same assembly. Indeed, it would be monstrous to feel pleasure in the schisms and divisions of the Churches, and not to consider that the greatest of goods consists in the knitting together the members of Christ's body. But, alas! my inability is as real as my desire. No one knows better than yourself, that time alone is the remedy of ills that time has matured. Besides, a strong and vigorous treatment is necessary to get at the root of the complaint. You will understand this hint, though there is no reason why I should not speak out.

"Self-importance, when rooted by habit in the mind, yields to the exertions of no one man, nor one letter, nor a short time; unless

there be some arbiter in whom all parties have confidence, suspicions and collisions will never altogether cease. If indeed the influence of divine grace were shed upon me, and gave me power in word and deed and spiritual gifts to prevail with those rival parties, then this daring experiment might be demanded of me; though, perhaps, even then you would not advise me to attempt this adjustment of things by myself, without the coöperation of the bishop [Meletius of Antioch] on whom principally falls the care of the church. But he cannot come hither, nor can I easily undertake a long journey while the winter lasts, or rather I cannot any how, for the Armenian mountains will be soon impassable even to the young and vigorous, to say nothing of my continued bodily ailments. I have no objection to write to tell him all this; but I have no expectation that writing will lead to anything, for I know his cautious character, and after all, written words have little power to convince the mind. There are so many things to urge, and to hear, and to answer, and to object, and to all this a letter is unequal, as having no soul, and being in fact only so much waste paper. However, as I have said, I will write. Only give me credit, most religious

and dear brother, for having no private feeling in the matter. Thank God, I have such towards no one. I have not busied myself in the investigation of the supposed or real complaints which are brought against this or that man; so my opinion has a claim on your attention as that of one who really cannot act from partiality or prejudice. I only desire, through the Lord's good-will, that all things may be done with ecclesiastical propriety.

"I was vexed to find from my dear son, Dorotheus, our associate in the ministry, that you had been unwilling to communicate with him. This was not the kind of conversation which you had with me, as well as I recollect. As to my sending to the West, it is quite out of the question. I have no one fit for the service. Indeed, when I look round, I seem to have no one on my side. I can but pray I may be found in the number of those seven thousand who have not bent the knee to Baal. I know the present persecutors of all of us seek my life; yet that shall not diminish aught of the zeal which I owe to the Churches of God." —*Ep.* 156.

The reader cannot have failed to remark the studiously courteous tone in which the

foregoing letters are written. The truth is, Basil had to deal on all hands with most untoward materials, which one single harsh or heedless word addressed to his correspondents would have served to set into a blaze. Thus he, the Exarch of Cæsarea, made himself the servant of all. "My brother Dorotheus," he writes to Peter of Alexandria, the successor of Athanasius, in 377, "distressed me by failing, as you report, in gentleness and mildness in his conversations with your excellency. I attribute this to the times. For I seem, for my sins, to prosper in nothing, since the worthiest brethren are found deficient in gentleness and fitness for their office, from not acting according to my wishes."—*Ep.* 266.

Basil did not live to see the Churches, for which he laboured, in a more Catholic condition. The notes of the Church were impaired and obscured in his part of Christendom, and he had to fare on as he best might,—admiring, courting, yet coldly treated by the Latin world, desiring the friendship of Rome, yet wounded by her reserve,—suspected of heresy by Damasus, and accused by Jerome of pride.

CHAPTER IV.

BASIL AND GREGORY.

"What are those discourses that you hold one to another, as you walk and are sad?"

It often happens that men of very dissimilar talents and tastes are attracted together by their very dissimilitude. They live in intimacy for a time, perhaps a long time, till their circumstances alter, or some sudden event comes to try them. Then the peculiarities of their respective minds are brought out into action; and quarrels ensue, which end in coolness or separation. It would not be right or true to say that this is exemplified in the instance of the two blessed Apostles, whose "sharp contention" is related in the book of Acts; for they had been united in spirit once for all by a divine gift; and yet their strife reminds us of what takes place in life continually. And it so far resembled the every-day quarrels of friends, in that it arose from difference of temper and character in those favoured servants

of God. The zealous heart of the Apostle of the Gentiles endured not the presence of one who had swerved in his course; the indulgent spirit of Barnabas felt that a first fault ought not to be a last trial. Such are the two main characters which are found in the Church,—high energy, and sweetness of temper; far from incompatible of course, united in Apostles, though in different relative proportions, yet only partially combined in ordinary Christians, and often altogether parted from each other.

This contrast of character, leading, first, to intimacy, then to differences, is interestingly displayed, though painfully, in one passage of the history of Basil and Gregory;—Gregory the affectionate. the tender-hearted, the man of quick feelings, the accomplished, the eloquent preacher,—and Basil, the man of firm resolve and hard deeds, the high-minded ruler of Christ's flock, the diligent labourer in the field of ecclesiastical politics. Thus they differed; yet not as if they had not much in common still; both had the blessing and discomfort of a sensitive mind; both were devoted to an ascetic life; both were men of classical tastes; both were special champions

of the Catholic creed; both were skilled in argument, and successful in their use of it; both were in highest place in the Church, the one Exarch of Cæsarea, the other Patriarch of Constantinople. I will now attempt to sketch the history of their intimacy.

Basil and Gregory were both natives of Cappadocia, but here, again, under different circumstances; Basil was born of a good family, and with Christian ancestors: Gregory was the son of the bishop of Nazianzus, who had been brought up an idolater, or rather an Hypsistarian, a mongrel sort of religionist, part Jew, part Pagan. He was brought over to Christianity by the efforts of his wife Nonna, and at Nazianzus admitted by baptism into the Church. In process of time he was made bishop of that city; but not having a very firm hold of the faith, he was betrayed in 360 into signing the Arminian creed, which caused him much trouble, and from which at length his son rescued him. Cæsarea being at no insurmountable distance from Nazianzus, the two friends had known each other in their own country; but their intimacy began at Athens, whither they separately repaired for the pur-

poses of education. This was about A.D. 351, when each of them was twenty-two years of age. Gregory came to the seat of learning shortly before Basil, and thus was able to be his host and guide on his arrival; but fame had reported Basil's merits before he came, and he seems to have made his way, in a place of all others most difficult to a stranger, with a facility peculiar to himself. He soon found himself admired and respected by his fellow-students; but Gregory was his only friend, and shared with him the reputation of talents and attainments. They remained at Athens four or five years; and, at the end of the time, made the acquaintance of Julian, since of evil name in history as the Apostate. Gregory thus describes in after life his early intimacy with Basil:—

"Athens and letters followed on my stage;
Others may tell how I encountered them;—
How in the fear of God, and foremost found
Of those who knew a more than mortal lore;—
And how, amid the venture and the rush
Of maddened youth with youth in rivalry,
My tranquil course ran like some fabled spring,
Which bubbles fresh beneath the turbid brine;
Not drawn away by those who lure to ill,
But drawing dear ones to the better part.

There, too, I gained a further gift of God,
Who made me friends with one of wisdom high,
Without compeer in learning and in life.
Ask ye his name?—in sooth, 'twas Basil, since
My life's great gain,—and then my fellow dear
In home, and studious search, and knowledge earned.
May I not boast how in our day we moved
A truest pair, not without name in Greece;
Had all things common, and one only soul
In lodgment of a double outward frame?
Our special bond, the thought of God above,
And the high longing after holy things.
And each of us was bold to trust in each,
Unto the emptying of our deepest hearts,
And then we loved the more, for sympathy
Pleaded in each, and knit the twain in one."

The friends had been educated for rhetoricians, and their oratorical powers were such, that they seemed to have every prize in prospect which a secular ambition could desire. Their names were known far and wide, their attainments acknowledged by enemies, and they themselves personally popular in their circle of acquaintance. It was under these circumstances that they took the extraordinary resolution of quitting the world together,—extraordinary the world calls it, utterly perplexed to find that any conceivable objects can, by any sane person, be accounted better than its own gifts and favours. They resolved to seek

baptism of the Church, and to consecrate their gifts to the service of the Giver. With characters of mind very different,—the one grave, the other lively; the one desponding, the other sanguine; the one with deep feelings, the other with feelings acute and warm;—they agreed together in holding, that the things that are seen are not to be compared to the things that are not seen. They quitted the world, while it entreated them to stay.

What passed when they were about to leave Athens, represents as in a figure the parting which they and the world took of each other. When the day of valediction arrived, their companions and equals, nay some of their tutors, came about them, and resisted their departure by entreaties, arguments, and even by violence. This occasion showed, also, their respective dispositions; for the firm Basil persevered, and went; the tender-hearted Gregory was softened, and stayed a while longer. Basil, indeed, in spite of the reputation which attended him, had, from the first, felt disappointment with the celebrated abode of philosophy and literature; and seems to have given up the world from a simple conviction of its empti-

ness. "He," says Gregory, "according to the way of human nature, when, on suddenly falling in with what we hoped to be greater, we find it short of its fame, experienced some such feeling, began to be sad, grew impatient, and could not congratulate himself on his place of residence. He sought an object which hope had drawn for him; and he called Athens 'hollow blessedness.'" Gregory himself, on the contrary, looked at things more cheerfully; as the succeeding sentences show. "Thus Basil; but I removed the greater part of his sorrow, meeting it with reason, and smoothing it with reflections, and saying (what was most true) that character is not at once understood, nor except by long time and perfect intimacy; nor are studies estimated, by those who are submitted to them, on a brief trial and by slight evidence. Thus I reassured him, and by continual trials of each other, I bound myself to him."—*Orat.* 43.

Yet Gregory had inducements of his own to leave the world, not to insist on his love of Basil's company. His mother had devoted him to God, both before and after his birth; and when he was a child he had a remarkable

dream, which made a great impression upon him. "While I was asleep," he says in one of his poems, which runs thus in prose, "a dream came to me, which drew me readily to the desire of chastity. Two virgin forms, in white garments, seemed to shine close to me. Both were fair and of one age, and their ornament lay in their want of ornament, which is a woman's beauty. No gold adorned their neck, nor jacinth; nor had they the delicate spinning of the silkworm. Their fair robe was bound with a girdle, and it reached down to their ankles. Their head and face were concealed by a veil, and their eyes were fixed on the ground. The fair glow of modesty was on both of them, as far as could be seen under their thick covering. Their lips were closed in silence, as the rose in its dewy leaves. When I saw them, I rejoiced much; for I said that they were far more than mortals. And they in turn kept kissing me, who drew light from their lips, fondling me as a dear son. And when I asked who and whence the women were, the one answered, 'Purity,' the other, 'Sobriety;' 'We stand by Christ, the King, and delight in the beauty of the celestial vir-

gins. Come, then, child, unite thy mind to our mind, thy light to our light; so shall we carry thee aloft in all brightness through the air, and place thee by the radiance of the immortal Trinity.'"—*Carm.* p. 930. He goes on to say, that he never lost the impression this made upon him, as "a spark of heavenly fire," or "a taste of divine milk and honey."

As far, then, as these descriptions go, one might say that Gregory's abandonment of the world arose from an early passion, as it may be called, for a purity higher than his own nature; and Basil's, from a profound sense of the world's nothingness and the world's defilements. Both seem to have viewed it as a sort of penitential exercise, as well as a means towards perfection.

When they had once resolved to devote themselves to the service of religion, the question arose, how they might best improve and employ the talents committed to them. Somehow, the idea of marrying and taking orders, or taking orders and marrying, building or improving their parsonages, and showing forth the charities, the humanities, and the gentilities of a family man, did not suggest itself to their minds.

They fancied that they must give up wife, children, property, if they would be perfect; and, this being taken for granted, that their choice lay between two modes of life, both of which they regarded as extremes. Here, then, for a time, they were in some perplexity. Gregory speaks of two ascetic disciplines, that of the solitary or hermit, and that of the secular;* one of which, he says, profits a man's self, the other his neighbour. Midway, however, between these lay the Cœnobite, or what we commonly call the monastic; removed from the world, yet acting in a certain select circle. And this was the rule which the friends at length determined to adopt, withdrawing from mixed society in order to be of the greater service to it.

The following is the passage in which Gregory describes the life which was the common choice of both of them:—

"Fierce was the whirlwind of my storm-toss'd mind,
Searching, mid holiest ways, a holier still.
Long had I nerved me, in the depths to sink
Thoughts of the flesh, and then more strenuously.
Yet, while I gazed upon diviner aims,
I had not wit to single out the best:

* ἄζυγες and μιγάδες.

For, as is aye the wont in things of earth,
Each had its evil, each its nobleness.
I was the pilgrim of a toilsome course,
Who had o'erpast the waves, and now look'd round,
With anxious eye, to track his road by land.
Then did the awful Thesbite's image rise,
His highest Carmel, and his food uncouth;
The Baptist wealthy in his solitude;
And the unencumbered sons of Jonadab.
But soon I felt the love of holy books,
The spirit beaming bright in learned lore,
Which deserts could not hear, nor silence tell.
Long was the inward strife, till ended thus:—
I saw, when men lived in the fretful world,
They vantaged other men, but risked the while
The calmness and the pureness of their hearts.
They who retired held an uprighter port,
And raised their eyes with quiet strength towards heaven;
Yet served self only, unfraternally.
And so, 'twixt these and those, I struck my path,
To meditate with the free solitary,
Yet to live secular, and serve mankind."

Not many years passed after their leaving Athens, when Basil put his resolution into practice; and, having fixed upon Pontus for his retirement, wrote to Gregory to remind him of his promise. On Gregory's hesitating, he wrote to expostulate with him. Gregory's answer was as follows:—

"I have not stood to my word, I own it;

having protested, ever since Athens and our friendship and union of heart there, that I would be your companion, and follow a strict life with you. Yet I act against my wish, duty annulled by duty, the duty of friendship by the duty of filial reverence. . . . . However, I still shall be able to perform my promise in a measure, if you will accept thus much. I will come to you for a time, if, in turn, you will give me your company here: thus we shall be quits in friendly service, while we have all things common. And thus I shall avoid distressing my parents, without losing you."—*Ep.* 1.

When we bear in mind what has been already mentioned about Gregory's father, we may well believe that there really were very urgent reasons against the son's leaving him, when it came to the point, over and above the ties which would keep him with a father and mother both advanced in years. Basil, however, was disappointed; and instead of retiring to Pontus, devoted a year to visiting the monastic institutions of Syria and Egypt. On his return, his thoughts again settled on his friend Gregory; and he attempted to over-

come the obstacle in the way of their old project, by placing himself in a district called Tiberina, near Gregory's own home. Finding, however, the spot cold and damp, he gave up the idea of it. On one occasion, while he was yet living in Cæsarea, where for a time he had taught rhetoric, Gregory wrote to him the following familiar letter, as from a countryman to an inhabitant of a town, not without a glance at Basil's peculiarities:—

"You shall not charge Tiberina upon me, with its ice and bad weather, O clean-footed, tip-toeing, capering man! O feathered, flighty man, mounted on Abaris's arrow, who, Cappadocian though you be, shun Cappadocia! A vast injury it is, when you townspeople are sallow, and have not your breath-full, and dole out the sun; and we are plump and in plenty, and have elbow-room! However, such is your condition; you are gentlemanlike, and wealthy, and a man of the world; I cannot praise it. Say not a word more, then, against our mud (you did not make the town, nor I the winter); if you do, I will match our wading with your trading,* and all the wretched things which are found in cities."
—*Ep.* 2.

* ἀντὶ πηλῶν τοὺς καπήλους.

Meanwhile Basil had chosen for his retreat a spot near Neocæsarea, in Pontus, close by the village where lay his father's property, where he had been brought up in childhood by his grandmother Macrina, and whither his mother and sister had retired for a monastic life after his father's death. The river Iris ran between the two places. Within a mile of their monastery was the Church of the Forty Martyrs, where father, mother, and sister were successively buried. These Martyrs were a number of the victims of the persecution of Licinius at Sebaste; Emmelia, Basil's mother, had collected their relics, and he himself and his brother Gregory of Nyssa have left us homilies in celebration of them. Here, then, it was that St. Basil dwelt in holy retirement for five or six years. On settling there, he again wrote to Gregory:—

"My brother Gregory writes me word that he has long been wishing to be with me, and adds, that you are of the same mind; however, I could not wait, partly as being hard of belief, considering I have been so often disappointed, and partly because I find myself pulled all ways with business. I must at once make for Pontus, where,

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perhaps, God willing, I may make an end of wandering. After renouncing, with trouble, the idle hopes which I once had, or rather the dreams (for it is well said, that hopes are waking dreams), I departed into Pontus in quest of a place to live in. There God has opened on me a spot exactly answering to my taste, so that I actually see before my eyes what I have often pictured to my mind in idle fancy.

"There is a lofty mountain, covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies beneath, enriched by the waters which are ever draining off upon it; and skirted by a spontaneous profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence; so as even to surpass Calypso's Island, which Homer seems to have considered the most beautiful spot on earth. Indeed, it is like an island, enclosed as it is on all sides; for deep hollows cut it off in two directions; the river, which has lately fallen down a precipice, runs all along one side, and is impassable as a wall; while the mountain extending itself behind, and meeting the hollows in a crescent, stops up the path at its roots. There is but one pass, and I am master of it. Behind my abode there is another gorge, rising

to a ledge up above, so as to command the extent of the plain and the stream which bounds it, which is not less beautiful to my taste, than the Strymon, as seen from Amphipolis. For while the latter flows leisurely, and swells into a lake almost, and is too still to be a river, the former is the most rapid stream I know, and somewhat turbid, too, by reason of the rock which closes on it above; from which, shooting down, and eddying in a deep pool, it forms a most pleasant scene for myself or anyone else; and is an inexhaustible resource to the country people, in the countless fish which its depths contain. What need to tell of the exhalations from the earth, or the breezes from the river? Another might admire the multitude of flowers, and singing-birds; but leisure I have none for such thoughts. However, the chief praise of the place is, that being happily disposed for produce of every kind, it nurtures what to me is the sweetest produce of all, quietness; indeed, it is not only rid of the bustle of the city, but is even unfrequented by travellers, except a chance hunter. It abounds indeed in game, as well as other things, but not, I am glad to say, in bears or wolves, such as you have, but in deer, and

wild goats, and hares, and the like. Does it not strike you what a foolish mistake I was near making when I was eager to change this spot for your Tiberina, the very pit of the whole earth? Pardon me, then, if I am now set upon it; for not Alcmæon himself, I suppose, would endure to wander further when he had found the Echinades."—*Ep.* 14.

Gregory answered this letter by one which is still extant, in which he satirises, point by point, the picture of the Pontine solitude which Basil had drawn to allure him, perhaps from distaste for it, perhaps in the temper of one who studiously disparages what, if he had admitted the thought, might prove too great a temptation to him. He ends thus: "This is longer perhaps than a letter, but shorter than a comedy. For yourself, it will be good of you to take this castigation well; but if you do not, I will give you some more of it."—*Ep.* 7. Basil *did* take it well; but this did not save him from the infliction of the concluding threat; for Gregory, after paying him a visit, continues in the same bantering strain in a later epistle.

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"Since you take my castigation well, I will now give you some more of it; and, to set off with Homer, let us

'Pass on, and sing thy garniture within,'

to wit, the dwelling without roof and without door,—the hearth without fire and smoke,—walls, however, baked enough, lest the mud should trickle on us, while we suffer Tantalus's penalty, thirst in the midst of wet;—that sad and hungry banquet, for which you called me from Cappadocia, not as for the frugal fare of the Lotophagi, but as if for Alcinous's board for one lately shipwrecked and wretched. I have remembrance of the bread and of the broth—so they were named—and shall remember them: how my teeth got stuck in your hunches, and next lifted and heaved themselves as out of paste. You, indeed, will set it out in tragic style yourself, taking a sublime tone from your own sufferings. But for me, unless that true lady Bountiful, your mother, had rescued me quickly, showing herself in need, like a haven to the tempest-tossed, I had been dead long ago, getting myself little honour, though much pity,

from Pontic hospitality. How shall I omit those ungardenlike gardens, void of pot-herbs? or the Augean store, which we cleared out and spread over them; what time we worked the hillside plough, vine-planter I, and awful you, with this neck and hands, which still bear the marks of the toil (O earth and sun, air and virtue! for I will rant a bit), not the Hellespont to yoke, but to level the steep. If you are not annoyed at this description, nor am I; but if you are, much more I at the reality. Yet I pass over the greater part, from tender remembrance of those other many things which I have shared with you."—*Ep.* 5.

This certainly is not a picture of comfort; and curiously contrasts with Basil's romantic view of the same things. But for the following letter, one could fancy that it was too much even for Gregory; but on Basil seeming to be hurt, he wrote thus:—

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"What I wrote before, concerning your Pontic abode, was in jest, not in earnest; but now I write very much in earnest. 'Who shall make me as in months past, as in the days' when I

had the luxury of suffering hardship with you? since voluntary pain is a higher thing than involuntary comfort. Who shall restore me to those psalmodies, and vigils, and departures to God through prayer, and that (as it were) immaterial and incorporeal life? or to that union of brethren, in nature and soul, who are made gods by you, and carried on high? or to that rivalry in virtue and sharpening of heart, which we consigned to written decrees and canons? or to that loving study of divine oracles, and the light we found in them, with the guidance of the Spirit? or, to speak of lesser and lower things, to the bodily labours of the day, the wood-drawing and the stone-hewing, the planting and the draining? or to that golden plane, more honourable than that of Xerxes, under which, not a jaded king, but a weary monk did sit?—planted by me, watered by Apollos (that is, your honourable self), increased by God, unto my honour; that there should be preserved with you a memorial of my loving toil, as Aaron's rod that budded (as Scripture says and we believe) was kept in the ark. It is very easy to wish all this, not easy to gain it. Do you, however, come to me, and revive my virtue, and work with me; and whatever bene-

fit we once gained together, preserve for me by your prayers, lest otherwise I fade away by little and little, as a shadow, while the day declines. For you are my breath, more than the air, and so far only do I live, as I am in your company, either present, or, if absent, by your image."—*Ep.* 6.

From this letter it appears that Basil had made up for Gregory's absence by collecting a brotherhood around him; in which indeed he had such success that he is considered the founder of the monastic or cœnobitic discipline in Pontus,—a discipline to which the Church gave her sanction, as soon as her establishment by the temporal power had increased the reasons for asceticism, and, increasing its professors, had created the necessity of order and method among them. The following letter, written by Basil at the time of the foregoing letters of Gregory, gives us some insight into the nature of his rule, and the motives and feelings which influenced him: it is too long to do more than extract portions of it.

BASIL TO GREGORY.

"Your letter brought you before me, just as one recognizes a friend in his children. It is

just like you, to tell me it was but little to describe the place, without mentioning my habits and method of life, if I wished to make you desirous to join me; it was worthy of a soul which counts all things of earth as nothing, compared with that blessedness which the promises reserve for us. Yet really I am ashamed to tell you how I pass night and day in this lonely nook. Though I have left the city's haunts, as the source of innumerable ills, yet I have not yet learned to leave myself. I am like a man who, on account of sea-sickness, is angry with the size of his vessel as tossing overmuch, and leaves it for the pinnace or boat, and is sea-sick and miserable still, as carrying his delicacy of stomach along with him. So I have got no great good from this retirement. However, what follows is an account of what I proposed to do, with a view of tracking the footsteps of Him who is our guide unto salvation, and who has said: 'If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

"We must strive after a quiet mind. As well might the eye ascertain an object put before it, while it is wandering restless up and down, and sideways, without fixing a steady gaze upon it,

as a mind, distracted by a thousand worldly cares, be able clearly to apprehend the truth. He who is not yet yoked in the bonds of matrimony, is harassed by frenzied cravings, and rebellious impulses, and hopeless attachments; he who has found his mate is encompassed with his own tumult of cares: if he is childless, there is desire of children; has he children, anxiety about their education; attention to his wife, care of his house, oversight of his servants, misfortunes in trade, quarrels with his neighbours, lawsuits, the risks of the merchant, the toil of the farmer. Each day, as it comes, darkens the soul in its own way; and night after night takes up the day's anxieties, and cheats the mind with corresponding illusions. Now, one way of escaping all this is separation from the whole world; that is, not bodily separation, but the severance of the soul's sympathy with the body, and so to live without city, home, goods, society, possessions, means of life, business, engagements, human learning, that the heart may readily receive every impress of divine teaching. Preparation of heart is the unlearning the prejudices of evil converse. It is the smoothing the waxen tablet before attempting to write on it. Now, solitude

is of the greatest use for this purpose, inasmuch as it stills our passions, and gives opportunity to our reason to cut them out of the soul. Let there then be a place such as ours, separate from intercourse with men, that the tenour of our exercises be not interrupted from without. Pious exercises nourish the soul with divine thoughts. What state can be more blessed than to imitate on earth the choruses of Angels?—to begin the day with prayer, and honour our Maker with hymns and songs?—as the day brightens, to betake ourselves, with prayer attending on it throughout, to our labours, and to sweeten our work with hymns, as if with salt? Soothing hymns compose the mind to a cheerful and calm state. Quiet, then, as I have said, is the first step in our sanctification; the tongue purified from the gossip of the world; the eyes unexcited by fair colour or comely shape; the ear not relaxing the tone of the mind by voluptuous songs, nor by that especial mischief, the talk of light men and jesters. Thus the mind, saved from dissipation from without, nor, through the senses, thrown upon the world, falls back upon itself, and thereby ascends to the contemplation of God.

"The study of inspired Scripture is the chief way of finding our duty; for in it we find both instruction about conduct, and the lives of blessed men delivered in writing, as some breathing images of godly living, for the imitation of their good works. Hence, in whatever respect each one feels himself deficient, devoting himself to this imitation, he finds, as from some dispensary, the due medicine for his ailment. He who is enamoured of chastity, dwells upon the history of Joseph, and from him learns chaste actions, finding him not only able to master the assaults of pleasure, but virtuous by habit. He is taught endurance from Job. Or, should he be inquiring how to be at once meek and great-hearted, hearty against sin, meek towards men, he will find David noble in warlike exploits, meek and unruffled as regards revenge on enemies. Such, too, was Moses, rising up with great heart upon sinners against God, but with meek soul bearing their evil-speaking against himself.

"This, too, is a very principal point to attend to,—knowledge how to converse; to interrogate without over-earnestness; to answer without desire of display; not to interrupt a profitable speaker, nor to desire ambitiously to put in a

word of one's own; to be measured in speaking and hearing; not to be ashamed of receiving, or to be grudging in giving, information, nor to disown what one has learned from others, as depraved women practise with their children, but to refer it candidly to the true parent. The middle tone of voice is best, neither so low as to be inaudible, nor ill-bred from its high pitch. One should reflect first what one is going to say, and then give it utterance; be courteous when addressed, amiable in social intercourse; not aiming to be pleasant by smartness, but cultivating gentleness in kind admonitions. Harshness is ever to be put aside, even in censuring."—*Ep.* 2.

These last remarks are curious, considering the account which, as we have seen, Gregory has left us of Basil's own manner. In another epistle, of an apologetic character, he thus speaks of the devotional exercises of his monastery:—

"Our people rise while it is yet night, for the house of prayer; and after confessing to God, in distress and affliction and continued tears, they rise up and turn to psalm-singing. And now, being divided into two, they respond

to each other, thereby deepening their study of the holy oracles, and securing withal attention of heart without wandering. Next, letting one lead the chant, the rest follow him; and thus, with variety of psalmody, they spend the night, with prayers interspersed; when day begins to dawn, all in common, as from one mouth and one heart, lift up to the Lord the psalm of confession, each making the words of repentance his own."—*Ep.* 207.

Such was Basil's life till he was called to the priesthood, which led to his leaving his retirement for Cæsarea;—by night, prayer; by day, manual labour, theological study, and mercy to the poor.

The next kindly intercourse between Basil and Gregory took place on occasion of the difference between Basil and his bishop, Eusebius; when, as has been already related, Gregory interfered successfully to reconcile them. And the next arose out of circumstances which followed the death of Gregory's brother, Cæsarius. On his death-bed he had left all his goods to the poor; a bequest which was thwarted, first, by servants and others about him, who carried off at once all the valuables on which they

could lay hands; and, after Gregory had come into possession of the residue, by the fraud of certain pretended creditors, who appealed to the law on his refusing to satisfy them. Basil, on this occasion, seconded his application to the Prefect of Constantinople, who was from Cæsarea, and had known the friends intimately there, as well as at Athens.

We now come to the election of Basil to the Exarchate of Cappadocia, which was owing in no small degree to the exertions of Gregory and his father in his favour. This event, which was attended with considerable hazard of defeat, from the strength of the civil party, and an episcopal faction opposed to Basil, doubtless was at the moment a cause of increased affection between the friends, though it was soon the occasion of the difference and coolness which I spoke of in the beginning of this chapter. Gregory, as I have said, was of an amiable temper, fond of retirement and literary pursuits, and of cultivating Christianity in its domestic and friendly aspect, rather than amid the toils of ecclesiastical warfare. I have also said enough to show that I have no thoughts whatever of accusing so great a Saint of any approach to selfishness; and his

subsequent conduct at Constantinople made it clear how well he could undergo and fight up against persecution in the quarrel of the Gospel. But such scenes of commotion were real sufferings to him, even independently of the personal risks which they involved; he was unequal to the task of ruling, and Basil in vain endeavoured to engage him as his assistant and comrade in the government of his exarchate. Let the following letter of Gregory explain his feelings:—

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"I own I was delighted to find you seated on the high throne, and to see the victory of the Spirit, in lifting up a light upon its candlestick, which even before did not shine dimly. Could I be otherwise, seeing the general interests of the Church so depressed, and so in need of a guiding hand like yours? However, I did not hasten to you at once, nor will I; you must not ask it of me. First, I did not, from delicacy towards your own character, that you might not seem to be collecting your partisans about you with indecency and heat, as objectors would say; next, for my own peace and reputation. Perhaps you will say, 'When, then, will you come, and till

when will you delay?' Till God bids, till the shadows of opposition and jealousy are passed. And I am confident it cannot be long before the blind and the lame give way, who are shutting out David from Jerusalem."—*Ep.* 45.

At length Gregory came to Cæsarea, where Basil showed him all marks of affection and respect: and when Gregory declined any public attentions, from a fear of the jealousy it might occasion, his friend let him do as he would, regardless, as Gregory observes, of the charge which might fall on himself, of neglecting Gregory, from those who were ignorant of the circumstances. However, Basil could not detain him long in the metropolitan city, as the following letter shows, written on occasion of a charge of heterodoxy, which a monk of Nazianzus advanced against Basil, and which Gregory had publicly and indignantly opposed, sending, however, to Basil to gain a clearer explanation from himself. Basil was much hurt to find he had anything to explain to Gregory. He answers in the following letter:—

BASIL TO GREGORY.

"I have received the letter of your religious-

ness, by the most reverend brother Hellenius; and what you have intimated, he has told me in plain terms. How I felt on hearing it, you cannot doubt at all. However, since I have determined that my affection for you shall outweigh my pain, whatever it is, I have accepted it as I ought to do, and I pray the Holy God, that my remaining days or hours may be as carefully conducted in their disposition towards you, as they have been in past time, during which, my conscience tells me, I have been wanting to you in nothing, small or great."

After saying that his life was a practical refutation of the calumny; that a brief letter would not do what years had failed in doing, and hinting that the matter ought never to have been brought before him, and that they who listen to tales against others will have tales told of themselves, he continues :—

"I know what has led to all this, and have urged every topic to hinder it; but now I am sick of the subject, and will say no more about it;—I mean, our little intercourse. For had we kept our old promise to each other, and had we had due regard to the claims which the churches have on us, we should have been the

greater part of the year together; and then there would have been no opening for these calumniators. Pray have nothing to say to them; let me persuade you to come here and assist me in my labours, particularly in my contest with the individual who is now assailing me. Your very appearance would have the effect of stopping him; as soon as you show these disturbers of our country that you will, by God's blessing, place yourself at the head of our friends, you will break up their cabal, and you will 'shut every unjust mouth that speaketh lawlessly against God.' And thus facts will show who are your followers in good, and who it is that halts and betrays through cowardice the word of truth. If, however, the Church be betrayed, why then I shall care little to set men right about myself by means of words, who account of me as men would naturally account who have not yet learned to measure themselves. Perhaps, in a short time, by God's grace, I shall be able to refute their slanders by very deed, for it seems likely that I shall have soon to suffer somewhat for the truth's sake more than usual; the best I can expect is banishment. Or, if this hope fails, after all,

Christ's judgment-seat is not far distant." *Ep.* 71.

The allusion in the last sentences is to the attempts upon him of the Emperor Valens, which were then impending. We have seen in a former chapter, how they were encountered and baffled by Basil's intrepidity; Valens appeared to be reconciled to him; but his jealousy of him led him to a measure, which involved consequences to Basil, worse than any worldly loss, the loss of Gregory. To lessen Basil's power, Valens divided Cappadocia into two parts. This was about two years after Basil's elevation. In consequence, a dispute arose between him and Anthimus, Bishop of Tyana. Anthimus contended that an ecclesiastical division must necessarily follow the civil, and that, in consequence, he himself, as holding the chief see in the second Cappadocia, was now the rightful metropolitan of that province. The justice of the case was with Basil, but he was opposed by the party of bishops who were secretly Arianizers, and had already opposed themselves to his election. Accordingly, having might on his side, Anthimus began to alienate the monks from Basil, to appropriate those revenues of the

Church of Cæsarea which lay in his province, and to expel or gain over the presbyters, giving, as an excuse, that respect and offerings ought not to be paid to heterodox persons.

Gregory at once offered his assistance to his friend, hinting to him, at the same time, that some of those about him had some share of blame in the dispute. It happened unfortunately for their friendship that they were respectively connected with distinct parties in the Church. Basil knew and valued, and gained over many of the Semi-Arians, who dissented from the Catholic doctrine more from over-subtlety, or want of clearness of mind, than from unbelief. Gregory was in habits of intimacy with the monks of Nazianzus, his father's see, and these were eager for the Nicene formula, almost as a badge of party. In the letter last cited, Basil reflects upon these monks; and, on this occasion, Gregory warned him in turn against Eustathius and his friends, whose orthodoxy was suspicious, and who, being ill-disposed towards Anthimus, were likely to increase the difference between the latter and Basil. It may be observed that it was this connexion between Basil and Eustathius, to which Anthimus al-

luded, when he objected to pay offerings to the heterodox.

Gregory's offer of assistance to Basil was frankly made, and seems to have been as frankly accepted. "I will come, if you wish me," he had said, "if so be, to advise with you, if the sea wants water, or you a counsellor; at all events, to gain benefit, and to act the philosopher, by bearing ill usage in your company."—*Ep.* 47. Accordingly, they set out together for a district of Mount Taurus, in the second Cappadocia, where there was an estate or Church dedicated to St. Orestes, the property of the see of Cæsarea. On their return with the produce of the farm, they were encountered by the retainers of Anthimus, who blocked up the pass and attacked their company. This warfare between Christian bishops was obviously a great scandal in the Church, and Basil adopted a measure which he considered would put an end to it. He increased the number of bishoprics in that district, considering that residents might be able to secure the produce of the estate without disturbance, and moreover to quiet and gain over the minds of those who had encouraged Anthimus in his opposition. Sasima was a vil-

lage in this neighbourhood, and here he determined to place his friend Gregory, doubtless considering that he could not show him a greater mark of confidence than to commit to him the management of the quarrel, or could confer on him a post, to his own high spirit more desirable, than the place of risk and responsibility.

Gregory had been unwilling even to be made a priest; but he shrank with fear from the office of a bishop. He had upon him that overpowering sense of the awfulness of the ministerial commission which then commonly prevailed in more serious minds. "I feel myself to be unequal to this warfare," he had said on his ordination, "and therefore have hid my face, and slunk away. And I sought to sit down in solitude, being filled with bitterness, and to keep silence from a conviction that the days were evil, since God's beloved have kicked against the truth, and we have become revolting children. And besides this, there is the eternal warfare with one's passions, which my body of humiliation wages with me night and day, part hidden, part open;—and the tossing to and fro and whirling, through the senses and the delights of life; and the deep mire in which I stick fast;

and the law of sin warring against the law of the spirit, and striving to efface the royal image in us, and whatever of a divine effluence has been vested in us. Before we have subdued with all our might the principle which drags us down, and have cleansed the mind duly, and have surpassed others much in approach to God, I consider it unsafe either to undertake cure of souls, or mediatorship between God and man, for some such thing is a priest."—*Or.* 2.

With these admirable feelings the weakness of man mingled itself: at the urgent command of his father he had submitted to be consecrated; but the reluctance which he felt to undertake the office was now transferred to his occupying the see to which he had been appointed. There seems something indeed conceited in my arbitrating between Saints, and deciding how far each was right and wrong. But I do not really mean to do so: I am but reviewing their external conduct in its historical development. With this explanation I say, that an ascetic, like Gregory, ought not to have complained of the country where his see lay, as deficient in beauty and interest, even though he might be allowed to feel the responsibility of a situation which made

him a neighbour of Anthimus. Yet such was his infirmity; and he repelled the accusations of his mind against himself, by charging Basil with unkindness in placing him at Sasima. On the other hand, it is possible that Basil, in his eagerness for the settlement of his exarchate, too little consulted the character and taste of Gregory; and, above all, the feelings of duty which bound him to Nazianzus. This is the account which Gregory gives of the matter, in a letter which displays much heat, and even resentment, against Basil:—

"Give me," he says, "peace and quiet above all things. Why should I be fighting for sucklings and birds, which are not mine, as if in a matter of souls and canons? Well, play the man, be strong, turn everything to your own glory, as rivers suck up the mountain torrent, thinking little of friendship or intimacy, compared with high aims and piety, and disregarding what the world will think of you for all this, being the property of the Spirit alone; while, on my part, so much shall I gain from this your friendship, not to trust in friends, nor to put anything above God."—*Ep.* 48.

In the beginning of the same letter, he throws the blame upon Basil's episcopal throne,

which suddenly made him higher than Gregory. Elsewhere he accuses him of ambition, and desire of aggrandizing himself. Basil, on the other hand, seems to have accused him of indolence, slowness, and want of spirit.

Such was the melancholy crisis of an estrangement which had been for some time in preparation. Henceforth no letters, which are preserved, passed between the two friends; and but one act of intercourse is discoverable in their history. That exception indeed is one of much interest: Basil went to see Gregory at Nazianzus in A.D. 374 on the death of Gregory's father. But this was only like a sudden gleam, as if to remind us that charity still was burning within them; and scarcely mitigates the sorrowful catastrophe, from the point of view in which history presents it. Anthimus appointed a rival bishop to the see of Sasima; and Gregory, refusing to contest the see with him, returned to Nazianzus. Basil laboured by himself. Gregory retained his feeling of Basil's unkindness even after his death; though he revered and admired him not less, or even more, than before, and attributed his conduct to a sense of duty. In his commemorative oration, after praising his erection of new sees, he says: "To this measure I my-

self was brought in by the way. I do not seem bound to use a soft phrase. For admiring as I do all he did, more than I can say, this one thing I cannot praise,—for I will confess my feeling, which is in other ways not unknown to the world,—his extraordinary and unfriendly conduct towards me, of which time has not removed the pain. For to this I trace all the irregularity and confusion of my life, and my not being able, or not seeming, to command my feelings, though the latter of the two is a small matter; unless, indeed, I may be suffered to make this excuse for him, that, having views beyond this earth, and having departed hence even before life was over, he viewed everything as the Spirit's; and knowing how to reverence friendship, then only slighted it, when it was a duty to prefer God, and to make more account of the things hoped for, than of things perishable."—*Orat.* 43.

These lamentable occurrences took place before two years of Basil's episcopate had run out, and eight or nine years before his death; he had before and after them many trials, many sorrows; but the event in which these terminated probably was the greatest of all.

CHAPTER V.

RISE AND FALL OF GREGORY.

"Who will give me in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, and I will leave my people and depart from them. Because they are all adulterers, an assembly of transgressors; and they have bent their tongue, as a bow, for lies, and not for truth."

"THIS, O Basil, to thee, from me,"—thus Gregory winds up his sermon upon Basil,—"this offering to thee from a tongue once most dear to thee! thy fellow in honour and in age! If it approaches to be worthy of thee, the praise is thine; for, relying upon thee, I have set about this oration concerning thee. But if it be beneath and much beside my hope, what is to be expected from one worn down with years, sickness, and regret for thee? However, the best we can, is acceptable to God. But O that thou, divine and sacred heart, mayest watch over me from above, and that sting of my flesh, which God has given for my discipline, either end it by thy intercessions, or persuade me to bear it bravely!

and mayest thou direct my whole life towards that which is most convenient! and when I depart hence, then mayest thou receive me into thy tabernacles!"—*Orat.* 43.

Gregory delivered this discourse on his return to Cæsarea from Constantinople, three years after St. Basil's death; a busy, turbulent, eventful three years, in which he had been quite a different man from what he was before, though it was all past and over now, and was about to be succeeded by the same solitude in which Basil's death found him.

Gregory disliked the routine intercourse of society; he disliked ecclesiastical business, he disliked publicity, he disliked strife, he felt his own manifold imperfections, he feared to disgrace his profession, and to lose his hope; he loved the independence of solitude, the tranquillity of private life; leisure for meditation, reflection, self-government, study, and literature. He admired, yet he playfully satirized, Basil's lofty thoughts and heroic efforts. Yet, upon Basil's death, Basil's spirit, as it were, came into him; and within four months of it, he had become a preacher of the Catholic faith in an heretical metropolis, had formed a congregation, had

set apart a place for orthodox worship, and had been stoned by the populace. Was it Gregory, or was it Basil, that blew the trumpet in Constantinople, and waged a successful war in the very seat of the enemy, in despite of all his fluctuations of mind, misgivings, fastidiousness, disgust with self, and love of quiet? Such was the power of the great Basil, triumphing in his death, though failing throughout his life. Within four or five years of his departure to his reward, all the objects were either realized, or in the way to be realized, which he had in vain attempted, and sadly waited for. His eyes had failed in longing; they waited for the morning, and death closed them ere it came. He died on the 1st of January, 379; on the 19th of the same month the glorious Emperor Theodosius was invested with the imperial purple; by the 20th of April, Gregory had formed a Church in Constantinople; in February, in the following year, Theodosius declared for the Creed of Nicæa; in November he restored the Churches of Constantinople to the Catholics. In the next May he convoked, in that city, the second General Council, which issued in the pacification of the Eastern Church, in the overthrow of the great

heresy which troubled it, and (in a measure, and in prospect) in its union with the West. "Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus."

It was under such circumstances, when our Saint had passed through many trials, and done a great work, when he, a recluse hitherto, had all at once been preacher, confessor, metropolitan, president of a General Council, and now was come back again to Asia as plain Gregory—to be what he had been before, to meditate and to do penance, and to read, and to write poems, and to be silent as in former years, except that he was now lonely,*—his friend dead, his father dead, mother dead, brother Cæsarius, sister Gorgonia dead, and himself dead to this world, though still to live in the flesh for some eight dreary years,—in such a time and in such a place, at Cæsarea, the scene of Basil's labours, he made the oration to which I have referred above, and invoked Basil's glorified spirit; and his invocation ends thus:—"And when I depart hence, mayest thou receive me into thy tabernacles, so that, living together with one another, and beholding together more clearly and more

* Vid. Greg. Ep. 80, and Carm. p. 990.

perfectly the Holy and Blessed Trinity, whose vision we now receive in poor glimpses, we may there come to the end of all our desires, and receive the reward of the warfare which we have waged, which we have endured! To thee, then, these words from me; but me who will there be to praise, leaving life after thee? even should I do aught praiseworthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for ever.—Amen."

The circumstances which brought Gregory to Constantinople were the following:—It was now about forty years since the Church of Constantinople had last had the blessing of orthodox teaching and worship. Paul, who had been elected bishop at the beginning of this period, had been visited with four successive banishments from the Arian party, and at length with martyrdom. He had been superseded in his see, first, by Eusebius, the leader of the Arians, who denied our Lord's divinity; then by Macedonius, the head of those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit; and then by Eudoxius, the Arianizer of the Gothic tribes. On the death of the last-mentioned, A.D. 370, the remnant of the Catholics elected for their bishop,

Evagrius, who was immediately banished by the Emperor Valens; and, when they petitioned him to reverse his decision, eighty of their ecclesiastics, who were the bearers of their complaints, were subjected to an atrocious punishment for their Christian zeal, being burned at sea in the ship in which they had embarked. In the year 379, the orthodox Theodosius succeeded to the empire of the East; but this event did not at once alter the fortunes of the Church in his metropolis. The body of the people, nay, the populace itself, and, what is stranger, numbers of the female population, were eagerly attached to Arianism, and menaced violence to any one who was bold enough to preach the true doctrine. Such was the internal state of the Church; in addition to which must be added, the attitude of its external enemies:—the Novatians, who, orthodox themselves in doctrine, yet possessed a schismatical episcopacy, and a number of places of worship in the city;—the Eunomians, professors of the Arian heresy in its most undisguised blasphemy, who also had established a bishop there;—and the Semi-Arians and Apollinarists, whose heretical sentiments have been, or will be hereafter, alluded to. This was the

condition of Constantinople when the orthodox members of its Church, under the sanction and with the coöperation of the neighbouring bishops, invited Gregory, whose gifts, religious and intellectual, were well known to them, to preside over it, instead of the heretical Demophilus, whom Valens, three years before, had placed there.

The history of Gregory's doings and fortunes at Constantinople may be told in a few words. A place of worship was prepared for him by the kindness of a relative. There he began to preach the true doctrine,—first, amid the contempt, then amid the rage and violence, of the Arian population. His congregation increased; he was stoned by the multitude, and brought before the civil authorities on the charge of creating a riot. At length, however, on Theodosius visiting the capital, he was recognized by him as bishop, and established in the temporalities of the see. However, upon the continued opposition of the people, and the vexatious combinations against him of his brother bishops, he resigned his see during the session of the second General Council, and retired to Asia Minor.

I do not intend to say more upon St. Gregory's public career; but before leaving the subject, I am tempted to make two reflections.

First, he was fifty years old when he was called to Constantinople; a consolatory thought for those who see their span of life crumbling away under their feet, and they apparently doing nothing. Gregory was nothing till he was almost an old man; had he died at Basil's age, he would have done nothing. He seems to have been exactly the same age as Basil; but Basil had done his work and was taken away, before Gregory had begun his.

The second reflection that suggests itself is this: in what a little time men move through the work which is, as it were, the end for which they are born, and which is to give a character to their names with posterity. They are known in history as the prime movers in this work, or as the instruments of that; as rulers, or politicians, or philosophers, or warriors; and when we examine dates, we often find that the exploits, or discoveries, or sway, which make them famous, lasted but a few years out of a long life, like plants that bloom once, and never again. Their ethical character, talents, acquirements,

actions, seem concentrated on a crisis, and give no sign of their existence as far as the world's annals are concerned, whether before or after. Gregory lived sixty years; his ecclesiastical life was barely three.

When, leaving Gregory's public, we turn to his personal character, we have before us a man of warm affections, amiable disposition, and innocent life. As a son, full of piety, tenderness, and watchful solicitude; as a friend or companion, lively, cheerful, and open-hearted; overflowing with natural feelings, and easy in the expression of them; simple, good, humble, primitive. His aspirations were high, as became a saint, his life ascetic in the extreme, and his conscience still more sensitive of sin and infirmity. At the same time he was subject to alternations of feeling; was deficient all along in strength of mind and self-control; and was harassed, even in his old age, by irritability, fear, and other passions, which one might think that even years, not to say self-discipline, would have brought into subjection. Such mere temptations and infirmities in no way interfere with his being a Saint, and, since they do not, it is consolatory to our weak hearts and feeble wills, to find from

the precedent of Gregory, that, being what we are, we nevertheless may be in God's favour. These then are some of the conspicuous points in Gregory's character; and the following extracts from his writings, in verse and prose, are intended in some measure to illustrate them.

At first sight, many persons may feel surprised at the rhetorical style of his sermons, or orations, as they are more fitly called: the following passage accounts for this characteristic of them. He considered he had gained at Athens, while yet in the world, a rare talent, the science of thought and speech; and next he considered that what had cost him so much, should not be renounced, but consecrated to religious uses. "This I offer to God," he says, "this I dedicate, which alone I have left myself, in which only I am rich. For all other things I have surrendered to the commandment and the Spirit; and I have exchanged for the all-precious pearl whatever I had; and I have become, or rather long to become, a great merchant, buying things great and imperishable with what is small and will certainly decay. Discourse alone I retain, as being the servant of the Word, nor should I ever willingly neglect this possession; rather I

honour and embrace and take more pleasure in it than in all other things in which the many take pleasure; and I make it my life's companion, and good counsellor, and associate, and guide heavenward, and ready comrade. I have said to wisdom, 'Thou art my sister.' With this I bridle my impetuous anger, with this I appease wasting envy, with this I lull to rest sorrow, the chain of the heart; with this I sober the flood of pleasure, with this I put a measure, not on friendship, but on dislike. This makes me temperate in good fortune, and high-souled in poverty; this encourages me to run with the prosperous traveller, to stretch a hand to the falling, to be weak with the weak, and to be merry with the strong. With this, home and foreign land are all one to me, and change of places, which are foreign to me equally, and not mine own. This makes me see the difference between two worlds, withdraws me from one, joins me to the other."—*Orat.* 6. 6.

When he was ordained priest, he betook himself in haste to Pontus, and only after a time returned to Nazianzus. He thus speaks of this proceeding:—

"The chief cause was my surprise at the

unexpected event; as they who are astounded by sudden noises, I did not retain my power of reflection, and therefore I offended against modesty, which I had cherished my whole time. Next, a certain love insinuated itself, of the moral beauty of quiet, and of retirement; for of this I had been enamoured from the beginning, more perhaps than any who have studied letters, and in the greatest and most severe of dangers, I had vowed to pursue it, nay, had even reached so far as to be in its threshold. Accordingly, I did not endure being tyrannized over, and being thrust into the midst of tumult, and dragged forcibly away from this mode of life, as if from some sacred asylum. For nothing seemed to me so great, as by closing up the senses, and being rid of flesh and world, and retiring upon one's self, and touching nothing human, except when absolutely necessary, and conversing with one's self and God, to live above things visible, and to bear within one the divine vision always clear, pure from the shifting impressions of earth,—a true mirror unsullied, of God and the things of God, now and ever, adding light to light, the brighter to the dimmer, gathering even now in hope the blessedness

of the world to come, — and to associate with Angels, while still on earth, leaving the earth and raised aloft by the spirit. Whoso of you is smitten with this love, knows what I say, and will be indulgent to my feeling at that time."— *Orat.* 2.

He professes that he could not bring himself to make a great risk, and to venture ambitiously, but preferred to be safe and sure. "Who is there, when he has not yet devoted himself and learned to receive God's hidden wisdom in mystery, being as yet a babe, yet fed on milk, yet unnumbered in Israel, yet unenlisted in God's army, yet unable to take up Christ's Cross as a man, not yet an honoured member of Him at all, who would, in spite of this, submit with joy and readiness to be placed at the head of the fulness of Christ?* No one, if I am to be the counsellor; for this is the greatest of alarms, this the extremest of dangers, to every one who understands how great a thing it is to succeed, and how ruinous to fail. Let another sail for traffic, so I said, and cross the expanse of ocean, and keep constant company with winds and waves, to gain much, if so be, and to risk much. This

* Vide Eph. i. 23.

may suit a man apt in sailing, apt in trafficking; but what I prefer is to remain on land, to plough a small glebe and a dear one, to pay distant compliments to lucre and the sea, and thus to live, as I may be able, with a small and scanty loaf, and to linger along a life safe and surgeless, not to hazard a vast and mighty danger for mighty gains. To a lofty mind, indeed, it is a penalty not to attempt great things, not to exercise its powers upon many persons, but to abide in what is small, as if lighting a small house with a great light, or covering a child's body with a youth's armour; but to the small it is safety to carry a small burden, nor, by undertaking things beyond his powers, to incur both ridicule and a risk; just as to build a tower becomes him only who has wherewith to finish."—*Orat.* 2.

It is plain that the gentle and humble-minded Gregory was unequal to the government of the Church and province of Constantinople, which were as unworthy, as they were impatient, of him. Charges of his incompetency formed part of the ground on which a successful opposition was made to him in the second General Council. What notions, however, his enemies had of fitness, is plain from the following extract. The

truth is, Gregory was in no sense what is called, rightly or wrongly, a party man; and while he was deficient, perhaps, in the sagacity, keenness, vigour, and decision for which a public man too often incurs the reproach of that name, he also had that kindness of heart, dispassionateness, and placability, which more justly avail to rescue a person from it. It was imputed to him that he was not severe enough with his fallen persecutors. He thus replies:—

"Consider what is charged against me. 'So much time is passed,' they say, 'of your governing the Church, at the critical moment, with the emperor's favour, which is of such importance. What symptom of the change is there? How many persecutors had we before! what misery did we not suffer! what insults, what threats, what exiles, what plunderings, what confiscations, what burnings of our clergy at sea, what temples profaned with blood of saints, and instead of temples made charnel-houses! What has followed? We have become stronger than our persecutors, and they have escaped!' So it is. For me it is enough of vengeance upon our injurers, to have the power of retaliation. But these objectors think otherwise; for they are

very precise and righteous in the matter of reprisals, and therefore they expect the advantage of the opportunity. 'What prefect,' they ask, 'has been punished? or populace brought to its senses? or what incendiaries? what fear of ourselves have we secured to us for the time to come?' "—*Orat.* 42.

Gregory had by far too little pomp and pretence to satisfy a luxurious and fastidious city. They wanted "a king like the nations;" a man who had a presence, who would figure and parade and rustle in silk, some Lord-Mayor's preacher or West-end divine, who could hold forth and lay down the law, and be what is thought dignified and grand; whereas they had no one but poor, dear, good Gregory, a monk of Nazianzus, a personage who, in spite of his acknowledged learning and eloquence, was but a child, had no knowledge of the world, no manners, no conversation, and no address; who was flurried and put out in high society, and who would have been a bad hand at a platform speech, and helpless in the attempt to keep a modern vestry in order. "Perhaps, too," he continues, "they may cast this slur upon me, as indeed they have, that I do not keep a good

table, nor dress richly; and that there is a want of style when I go abroad, and a want of pomp when people address me. Certainly, I forgot that I had to rival consuls and prefects and illustrious commanders, who have more wealth than they know what to do with. If all this is heinous, it has slipped my mind; forgive me this wrong; choose a ruler instead of me, who will please the many; restore me to solitude, to rusticity, and to God, whom only I shall please, and that by being poor."

And shortly before, "*This is my character:* I do not concur in many points with the many; I cannot persuade myself to walk their pace; this may be rudeness and awkwardness, but still it is my character. What to others are pleasures, annoy me; and what I am pleased with, annoys others. Indeed, it would not surprise me, even were I put into confinement as a nuisance, and were I considered to be without common wits by the multitude, as is said to have happened to a Greek philosopher, whose good sense was accused of being derangement, because he made jest of all things, seeing that the serious objects of the many were really ridiculous; or if I were accounted full of new

wine, as Christ's disciples, from their speaking with tongues, the power of the Spirit being mistaken in them for excitement of mind."—*Ibid.*

He has a similar passage, written, after his resignation, in verse, which must here be unworthily exhibited in prose. "This good," he says, "alone will be free and secure from restraint or capture,—a mind raised up to Christ. No more shall I be entertained at table by mortal prince, as heretofore; I, Gregory, to pack a few comforts in me, placed in the midst of them, bashful and speechless, not breathing freely, feasting like a slave. No magistrate shall punish me with a seat, either near him, or below him, giving its due place to a grovelling spirit. No more shall I clasp blood-stained hands, or take hold of beard, to gain some small favour. Nor, hurrying with a crowd to some sacred feast of birthday [illegible]al, or marriage, shall I seize on all that [illegible] and [illegible], some things for my jaws, and some [illegible]ndants with their greedy palms, [illegible]'s; and then carrying myself off, [illegible] grave, late in the evening, drag [illegible]neward my ailing carcass, worn out, [illegible]ng with satiety, yet hastening to another feast, before I have shaken off the former

infliction."—*Carm.* ii. 17. One who is used to bread and water is overset by even a family dinner; much less could Gregory bear a city feast or conservative banquet.

On his return to Asia, first he had stayed for a time at Nazianzus; thence he went to Arianzus, the place of his birth. Here he passed the whole of Lent, without speaking, with a view of gaining command over his tongue, in which, as in other respects, he painfully felt or fancied his deficiency. He writes the following notes to a friend:—

"You ask what my silence means? it means measurement of speaking, and not speaking. For he who can do it in whole, will more easily do it in part. Besides, it allays anger, when it is not brought out into words, but is extinguished in itself."—*Ep.* 86. Again: "I do not forbid your coming to me; though my tongue be still, my ears shall be gladly [illegible] with [illegible] your conversation; since to hear what to having [illegible] not less precious than to speak it." [illegible] good again: "I am silent in conversation, being to speak what I ought to speak; that I am exercising myself in mastery of the sions. If this satisfies the inquirer, it [illegible] we

if not, at least silence brings this gain, that I have not to enter into explanations."—98.

Gregory was now fifty-two or three; there is something remarkable in a man so advanced in life taking such vigorous measures to overcome himself.

The following passages from his poems allude to the same, or similar infirmities:—

I lost, O Lord, the use of yesterday;
Anger came on, and stole my heart away.
O may this morning's light until the evening stay!

Again:

The serpent comes anew! I hold Thy feet.
Help, David! help, and strike thy harp-strings sweet!
Hence! choking spirit, hence! to thine own hell retreat.

Some temptation or other is alluded to in the following poems; though perhaps it is not fair to make a poet responsible, in his own person, for all he speaks as if from himself.

Here are his thoughts for the

MORNING.

I rise, and yield my clasped hands to Thee.
Henceforth the darkness hath no part in me,
Thy sacrifice this day;
Abiding firm, and with a freeman's might
Stemming the waves of passion in the fight.
Ah! should I from Thee stray,
My hoary head, Thy table where I bow,
Will be my shame, which are mine honour now.
Thus I set out;—Lord, lead me on my way!

And then, after "the burden of the day, and the heat," we find him looking back when he comes to the

EVENING.

O Holiest Truth, how have I lied to Thee!
I vowed this day Thy festival should be;
Yet I am dim ere night.
Surely I made my prayer, and I did deem
That I could keep in me Thy morning beam
Immaculate and bright.
But my foot slipped, and, as I lay, he came,
My gloomy foe, and robbed me of heaven's flame.
Help Thou my darkness, Lord, till I am light.

In the verses on Morning an allusion may be observed to his priesthood. The following lines bear a more express reference to it, and perhaps to Penance also:—

In service o'er the mystic feast I stand,
I cleanse Thy victim-flock, and bring them near
In holiest wise, and by a bloodless rite.
O Fire of love! O gushing Fount of Light!
(As best I know, who need Thy cleansing hand),
Dread office this, bemirèd souls to clear
Of their defilement, and again make bright.

These lines may have an allusion which introduces us to the following:—

As viewing sin, e'en in its faintest trace,
Murder in wrath, and in the wanton oath
The perjured tongue, and therefore shunning them,
So deem'd I safe a strict virginity.
And hence our ample choir of holiest souls

Are followers of the unfleshly seraphim,
And Him who 'mid them reigns in lonely light.
These, one and all, rush towards the thought of death,
And hope of second life, with single heart,
Loosed from the law and chain of marriage vow.
For I was but a captive at my birth,
Sin my first life, till its base discipline
Revolted me towards a nobler path.
Then Christ drew near me, and the Virgin-born
Spoke the new call to join His virgin-train.
So now towards highest heaven my innocent brow
I raise exultingly, sans let or bond,
Leaving no heir of this poor tabernacle
To ape me when my proper frame is broke;
But solitary with my only God,
And truest souls to bear me company.

It so happens that we have a vast deal of Gregory's poetry, which he doubtless never intended for publication, but which formed the recreation of his retirement. From one of these compositions, the following playful extract, on the same subject, is selected:—

As when the hand some mimic form would paint,
It marks its purpose first in shadows faint,
And next its store of varied hues applies,
Till outlines fade, and the full limbs arise;
So in the earlier school of sacred lore
The virgin life no claim of honour bore,
While in Religion's youth the Law held sway
And traced in symbols dim that better way.
But, when the Christ came by a virgin-birth,—
His radiant passage from high heaven to earth,—

And, spurning father for His mortal state,
Did Eve and all her daughters consecrate;
Solved fleshly laws, and in the letter's place
Gave us the spirit and the word of grace;—
Then shone the glorious Celibate at length,
Robed in the dazzling lightnings of its strength,
Surpassing spells of earth and marriage vow,
As soul the body, heaven this world below,
The eternal peace of saints life's troubled span,
And the high throne of God the haunts of man.
So now there circles round the King of Light
A heaven on earth, a blameless court and bright,
Aiming as emblems of their God to shine,
Christ in their heart, and on their brow His sign,
Soft funeral lights in the world's twilight dim,
Seeing their God, and ever one with Him.

'Ye countless multitude, content to bow
To the soft thraldom of the marriage vow!
I mark your haughty step, your froward gaze,
Gems deck your hair, and silk your limbs arrays;
Come, tell the gain which wedlock has conferred
On man; and then the single shall be heard.

The married many thus might plead, I ween;
Full glib their tongue, right confident their mien:—
"Hear, all who live! to whom the nuptial rite
Has brought the privilege of life and light,
We, who are wedded, but the law obey,
Stamped at creation on our blood and clay,
What time the Demiurge our line began,
Oped Adam's side, and out of man drew man.
Thenceforth let children of a mortal sod
Honour the law of earth, the primal law of God.

"List, you shall hear the gifts of price that lie
Gathered and bound within the marriage tie.
What taught the arts of life, the truths that sleep
In earth, or highest heaven, or vasty deep?
What filled the mart, and urged the vessel brave
To link in one far countries o'er the wave?
What raised the town?—what gave the type and germ
Of social union, and of sceptre firm?
Who the first husbandman, the glebe to plough,
And rear the garden, but the marriage vow?

"Nay, list again! who seek its kindly chain,
A second self, a double presence gain;
Hands, eyes, and ears, to act or suffer here,
Till e'en the weak inspire both love and fear—
A comrade's sigh, to soothe when cares annoy—
A comrade's smile, to elevate his joy.

"Nor say it weds us to a carnal life;
When want is urgent, fears and vows are rife.
Light heart is his, who has no yoke at home,
Scant prayers for blessings as the seasons come.
But wife, and offspring, goods which go on stay,
Teach us our need, and make us trust and pray.
Take love away, and life would be defaced,
A ghastly vision on a howling waste,
Stern, heartless, reft of the sweet spells, which swage
The throes of passion, and which gladden age.
No child's sweet pranks once more to make us young;
No ties of place about our heart-strings flung;
No public haunts to cheer; no festive tide,
Where harmless mirth and smiling wit preside;
A life, which scorns the gifts which Heaven assign'd,
Nor knows the sympathy of human kind.

"Prophets and teachers, priests and victor kings,
Decked with each grace which heaven-taught nature brings,
These were no giant offspring of the earth,
But to the marriage-promise owe their birth :—
Moses and Samuel, David, David's son,
The blessed Thesbite, and more blessed John,
The sacred twelve in apostolic choir,
Strong-hearted Paul, instinct with seraph-fire,
And others, now or erst, who to high heaven aspire.
Bethink ye ; should the single state be best,
Yet who the single, but my offspring blest?
My sons, be still, nor with your parents strive,
They coupled in their day, and so ye live."

Thus marriage pleads. Now let her rival speak ;
Dim is her downcast eye, and pale her cheek ;
Untrimmed her gear ; no sandals on her feet ;
A sparest form for austere tenant meet.
She drops her veil her modest face around,
And her lips open, but we hear no sound.
I will address her :—"Hail ! O child of heaven,
Glorious within ! to whom a post is given
Hard by the throne, where Angels bow and fear,
E'en while thou hast a name and mission here,
O deign thy voice, unveil thy brow, and see
Thy ready guard and minister in me.
Oft hast thou come heaven-wafted to my breast,
Bright Spirit ! so come again, and give me rest !"

. . . "Ah ! who has hither drawn my backward feet,
Changing for worldly strife my lone retreat?
Where, in the silent chant of holy deeds,
I praise my God, and tend the sick soul's needs ;
By toils of day, and vigils of the night,
By gushing tears, and blessed lustral rite.

I have no sway amid the crowd, no art
In speech, no place in council or in mart;
Nor human law, nor judges throned on high,
Smile on my face, and grant my words reply.
Let others seek earth's honours; be it mine
One law to cherish, and to track one line;
Straight on towards heaven to press with single bent,
To know and love my God, and then to die content."
&c. &c.

It would take up too much time to continue the poem, of which I have attempted the above rude and free translation (or rather paraphrase, as indeed are all the foregoing); or to introduce any other specimens of the poetical talents of this accomplished Father of the Church.

I end with one or two stanzas, which give an account of the place and circumstances of his retirement. I am obliged again to warn the reader, that he must not fancy he has gained an idea of Gregory's poetry from my attempts at translation; and should it be objected that this is not treating Gregory well, I answer, that at least I am as true to the original as if I exhibited it in plain prose.

Some one whispered yesterday
Of the rich and fashionable,
"Gregory, in his own small way,
Easy was, and comfortable.

Had he not of wealth his fill,
Whom a garden gay did bless,
And a gently trickling rill,
And the sweets of idleness?"

I made answer: "Is it ease
Fasts to keep, and tears to shed?
Vigil hours and wounded knees,
Call you these a pleasant bed?

Thus a veritable monk
Does to death his fleshly frame;
Be there who in sloth are sunk,
They have forfeited the name."

And now on taking leave of Gregory, who by his triumphs over Arianism has earned the title of "the Theologian" (which has been given before him to the Evangelist St. John), I am prompted to make him, if he will accept it, a little tribute of affection, unworthy of him, but in his own line. Poets create versifiers, and patrons are best approached in verse. So, as I wish to be his humble client, I beg to be allowed, after joining him at Constantinople, to attend on him and take his blessing in his solitude at Arianzus, in the following lines; and, if my tone in them is of too historico-critical a character to be in keeping with the reverence due to a canonized Saint, all I can say is, that

Gregory is dear to me because he is a man, and that, according to my own thinking, as I venture in familiarity, I advance in devotion.

GREGORIUS THEOLOGUS.

Peace-loving man, of humble heart and true!
What dost thou here?
Fierce is the city's crowd; the lordly few
Are dull of ear.
Sore pain it was to thee,—till thou didst quit
Thy patriarch-throne at length, as though for power unfit.

So works the All-wise, our services dividing
Not as we ask;
For the world's profit, by our gifts deciding
Our duty-task.
See in king's courts loth Jeremias plead,
And slow-tongued Moses rule by eloquence of deed.

Yes! thou, bright Angel of the East, didst rear
The cross divine,
Borne high upon thy liquid accents, where
Men mocked the sign;
Till that cold city heard thy battle-cry,
And hearts were stirred, and deemed a Pentecost was nigh.

Thou couldst a people raise, but couldst not rule:—
So, gentle one,
Heaven set thee free,—for, ere thy years were full,
Thy work was done;
According thee the lot thou lovedst best,
To muse upon the past,—to serve, yet be at rest.

CHAPTER VI.

APOLLINARIS.

"Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel: no secret is hid from thee. By the greatness of thy wisdom, and by thy traffic, hast thou increased thy strength, and thy heart is lifted up with thy strength."

No passage of early ecclesiastical history is more painful and more instructive than the fall of Apollinaris into heresy. It becomes so, from his high repute for learning and virtue, his intimacy with the great Catholic champions of his day, his former services to the Church, the temptation which seems to have led to it, the comparative insignificance of his error at first, yet the deplorable defection from the faith at which he, or at least his school, in no long time arrived. He began with the denial of our Lord's human soul, or rather of the intellectual part of it, which he considered was supplied by the Eternal Word incarnate. His object in this was to secure more completely the doctrine of the divinity of our

Lord's person, to impress upon the mind that He who came on earth, who taught, acted, and suffered, was God, and not a man, in every thought, word, and deed, though acting through and in human nature; and he did so with an especial view of overthrowing Arianism, which denied our Lord's divinity. His error, slight as it may appear in itself to orthodox Protestants of this day, is, at first sight, in one point of view, slight even in the judgment of the Catholic, who bears in mind that, according to the creed of the Church, our Lord, though perfect man, as far as nature is concerned, is not a man in the sense in which any given individual of the species is such, His person or subsistence not being human, but divine. Apollinaris seemed to say no more than this, that our Lord, not having a human personality, had not that particular part of human nature in which personality may be considered to reside—viz. the rational part of the soul. Such was the seemingly trivial character of his doctrinal error; it ended, however, as the history of his school shows us, in not many years, and by no difficult or complicated process, when we come to trace it, in a variety, or rather an alternative, of the wildest and most grievous

tenets — in the belief, on the one hand, that Christ's body was only in appearance flesh; or, on the other, that it was created out of the very substance of Almighty God.

This was the incredible aberration of a grave, a literary, an aged man, some of whose writings are still extant, and evince a vigour and elegance of mind not inferior to any writer of his day. An impious and monstrous gnosticism seemed to revive, in the person of a dialectician, versed in all the accomplishments of Grecian philosophy and rhetoric. A brief sketch of his history, and of the conduct of the Church towards him, may not be out of place in the scenes which I am here selecting out of the annals of ancient Christianity.

His father, who bore the same name, was a native of Alexandria, by profession a grammarian or school-master; who, passing from Berytus to the Syrian Laodicea, married and settled there, and eventually rose to the presbyterate in the Church of that city. Apollinaris, the son, had been born there in the early part of the fourth century, and was educated for the profession of rhetoric. After a season of suspense, as to the ultimate destination of his

talents, he resolved on dedicating them to the service of the Church; and, after being admitted into reader's orders, he began to distinguish himself by his opposition to philosophical infidelity. His work against Porphyry, the most valuable and elaborate of his writings, was extended to as many as thirty books. During the reign of Julian, when the Christian schools were shut up, and the Christian youth were debarred from the use of the classics, the two Apollinares, father and son, exerted themselves to supply the inconvenience thence resulting from their own resources. They wrote heroical pieces, odes, tragedies, and dialogues, after the style of Homer and Plato, and other standard authors, upon Christian subjects; and the younger, who is the subject of this chapter, wrote and dedicated to Julian a refutation of Paganism, on grounds of reason.

Nor did he confine himself to the mere external defence of the Gospel, or the preparatory training of its disciples. His expositions on Scripture were the most numerous of his works; he especially excelled in eliciting and illustrating its sacred meaning, and he had sufficient acquaintance with the Hebrew to enable him

to translate or comment on the original text. There was scarcely a controversy of the age, prolific as it was in heresies, into which he did not enter. He wrote against the Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and Manichees; against Origen and Marcellus; and in defence of the Millenarians.

Such a man seemed to be raised up providentially for the Church's defence in an evil day; and for awhile he might be said resolutely and nobly to fulfil his divinely appointed destiny. The Church of Laodicea, with the other cities of Syria, was at the time in Arian possession; when the great Athanasius passed through on his return to Egypt, after his second exile (A.D. 348), Apollinaris communicated with him, and was in consequence put out of the Church by the bishop in possession. On the death of Constantius (A.D. 361), the Catholic cause prevailed; and Apollinaris was consecrated to that see, or to that in Asia Minor which bears the same name.

Such was the station, such the reputation of Apollinaris, at the date of the Council thereupon held at Alexandria, A.D. 362, for settling the disorders of the Church; and yet, in the proceedings of that celebrated assembly, the

first intimation occurs of the existence of that doctrinal error by which he has been since known in history, though it is not there connected with his name. The troubles under Julian succeeded, and diverted the minds of all parties to other objects. The infant heresy slept till about the year 369; when it gives us evidence of its existence in the appearance of a number of persons, scattered about Syria and Greece, who professed it in one form or other, and by the solemn meeting of a Council in the former country, in which its distinctive tenets were condemned. We find that even at this date it had run the full length of the extravagances already specified; still the name of Apollinaris is not connected with them.

The Council, as I have said, was held in Syria, but the heresy which occasioned it had already, it seems, extended into Greece; for a communication, which the there assembled bishops addressed to Athanasius on the subject, elicited from him a letter, still extant, addressed to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, who had also written to him upon it. This letter, whether from tenderness to Apollinaris, or from difficulty in bringing the heresy home to him,

still does not mention his name. Another work written by Athanasius against the heresy, at the very end of his life, with the keenness and richness of thought which distinguish his writings generally, is equally silent; as are two letters to friends about the same date, which touch more or less on the theological points in question. All these treatises seem to be forced from the writer, and are characterized by considerable energy of expression: as if the Catholics were really perplexed with the novel statements of doctrine, and doubtful how Athanasius would meet them, or at least required his authority before pronouncing upon them; and, on the other hand, as if Athanasius himself were fearful of conniving at them, whatever private reasons he might have for wishing to pass them over. Yet there is nothing in the history or documents of the times to lead one to suppose that more than a general suspicion attached to Apollinaris; and, if we may believe his own statement, Athanasius died in persuasion of his orthodoxy. A letter is extant, written by Apollinaris on this subject, in which he speaks of the kind intercourse he had with the Patriarch of Alexandria, and of their agreement in faith, as

acknowledged by Athanasius himself. He claims him as his master, and at the same time slightly hints that there had been points to settle between them, in which he himself had given way. In another, written to an Egyptian bishop, he seems to refer to the very epistle to Epictetus noticed above, expressing his approbation of it. It is known, moreover, that Athanasius gave the usual letters of introduction to Timotheus, Apollinaris' intimate friend, and afterwards the most extravagant teacher of his sect, on his going to the Western Bishops, and that, on the ground of his controversial talents against the Arians.

Athanasius died in A.D. 371 or 373; and that bereavement of the Church was followed, among its calamities, by the open avowal of heresy on the part of Apollinaris. In a letter already referred to, he claims Athanasius as agreeing with him, and then proceeds to profess one of the very tenets against which Athanasius had written. In saying this, I have no intention of accusing so considerable a man of that disingenuousness which is almost the characteristic mark of heresy. It was natural that Athanasius should have exercised an influence

over his mind; and it was as natural that, when Athanasius was taken to his rest, Apollinaris should have found himself able to breathe more freely, yet have been unwilling to own it. While indulging in the speculations of his private judgment, he might still endeavour to persuade himself that he was not outstepping the teaching of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, it appears that the ecclesiastical authorities of the day, even when he professed his heresy, were for a while incredulous about the fact, from their recollection of his former services and his tried orthodoxy, and from the hope that he was but carried on into verbal extravagances by his opposition to Arianism. Thus they were as unwilling to impute to him heresy, as he to confess it. Nay, even when he had lost shame, attacked the Catholics with violence, and formed his disciples into a sect, not even then was he himself publicly animadverted on, though his creed was anathematized. His first condemnation was at Rome, several years after Athanasius' death, in company with Timotheus, his disciple. In the records of the General Council of Constantinople, several years later, his sect is mentioned as existing, with directions how to receive back into

the Church those who applied for reconciliation. He outlived this Council about ten years; his sect lasted only twenty years beyond him; but in that short time it had split into three distinct persuasions, of various degrees of heterodoxy, and is said to have fallen more or less into the errors of Judaism.

Such is the outline of a melancholy history. We may fitly conclude our review of it by referring to what contemporary writers say of him and his sect. Epiphanius speaks thus mournfully:—

"That aged and venerable man, who was ever so singularly dear to us, and to the holy father, Athanasius of blessed memory, and to all orthodox men, Apollinaris of Laodicea, he it was who originated and propagated this doctrine. And at first, when we were assured of it by some of his disciples, we disbelieved that such a man could admit such an error into his path, and patiently waited in hope, till we might ascertain the state of the case. For we argued that his youths, who came to us, not entering into the profound views of so learned and clear-minded a master, had invented these statements of themselves, not gained them from him. For

there were many points in which those who came to us were at variance with each other: some of them ventured to say that Christ had brought down His body from above (and this strange theory, admitted into the mind, developed itself into worse notions); others of them denied that Christ had taken a soul; and some ventured to say that Christ's body was consubstantial with the Godhead, and thereby caused great confusion in the East."—*Hær.* lxxvii. 2.

He proceeds afterwards:—

"Full of distress became our life at that time, that between brethren so exemplary as the forementioned, a quarrel should at all have arisen, that the enemy of man might work divisions among us. And great, my brethren, is the mischief done to the mind from such a cause. For were no question ever raised on the subject, the matter would be most simple: (for what gain has accrued to the world from such novel doctrine, or what benefit to the Church? rather has it not been an injury, as causing hatred and dissension?) but when the question was raised, it became formidable; it did not tend to good; for whether a man disallows this particular point, or even the slightest, still it is a denial. For we

must not, even in a trivial matter, turn aside from the path of truth. No one of the ancients ever maintained it — prophet, or apostle, or evangelist, or commentator—down to these our times, when this so perplexing doctrine proceeded from that most learned man aforesaid. His was a mind of no common cultivation; first in the preliminaries of literature in Greek education, then as a master of dialectics and argumentation. Moreover, he was most grave in his whole life, and reckoned among the very first of those who ever deserved the love of the orthodox, and so continued till his maintenance of this doctrine. Nay, he had undergone banishment, for not submitting to the Arians;—but why enlarge on it? It afflicted us much, and gave us a sorrowful time, as is the wont of our enemy."—*Ibid.* 24.

I have already noticed, in a former chapter, that St. Basil got into trouble from a supposed intimacy with Apollinaris. He had written one letter to him on an indifferent matter, in 356, when he himself was as yet a layman, and Apollinaris orthodox, and scarcely in orders. This was magnified by Eustathius into a correspondence and intercommunion between the

archbishop and the heresiarch. As in reality Basil knew very little even of his works, the description which the following passages give is valuable, as being, in fact, a sort of popular testimony to Apollinaris, more than an individual opinion. Basil wrote the former of them in defence of himself; in the latter, other errors of Apollinaris are mentioned, besides those to which I have had occasion to allude, for errors seldom are found single. "For myself," says Basil, "I never indeed considered Apollinaris as an enemy; nay, there are respects in which I reverence him; however, I did not so connect myself with him, as to make myself answerable for his alleged faults, considering, too, that I have a complaint of my own against him, on reading some of his compositions. I hear, indeed, that he is become the most copious of all writers; yet I have fallen in with but few of his works, for I have not leisure to search into such, and besides, I do not easily make the acquaintance of recent writers, being hindered by bodily health from continuing even the study of inspired Scripture laboriously, and as is fitting."—*Ep.* 244, § 3.

The other runs thus:—"After Eustathius comes Apollinaris; he, too, no slight disturber

of the Church; for, having a facility in writing and a tongue which served him on every subject, he has filled the world with his compositions, despising the warning, 'Beware of making many books,' because in the many are many faults. For how is it possible, in much speaking, to escape sin? First, there are his theological opinions, resting not on proofs from Scripture, but on human considerations. Again, there are his views on the resurrection, made up of fables, or rather of Judaisms; in which he says, that we shall again turn to the legal worship: again be circumcised, keep Sabbath, abstain from meat, offer sacrifices to God, worship in Jerusalem at the temple, and, in short, become Jews for Christians. What can be more absurd? or rather, more foreign to the Evangelical doctrine? Also, his views of the Incarnation have caused such confusion among my brethren, that few of those who have read them preserve the ancient marks of piety, but the many, attending to novelties, have turned aside to the questions and contentious speculations of these unprofitable theories."—*Ep.* 264, § 4.

It is a solemn and pregnant fact, that two of the most zealous and forward of Athanasius's

companions in the good fight against Arianism, Marcellus and Apollinaris, fell away into heresies of their own,—Marcellus denying our Lord's personality, Apollinaris His humanity. "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall."

"Alas, my brother! round thy tomb,
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the pastor's doom,
Who speaks and will not hear.

"The gray-haired saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of love."

CHAPTER VII.

ANTONY IN CONFLICT.

"He found him in a desert land, in a place of horror and of wilderness; He led him about, and taught him; and He kept him as the apple of His eye; that he might suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hard stone."

It would be a great mistake for us to suppose that we need quit our temporal calling, and go into retirement, in order to serve God acceptably. Christianity is a religion for this world, for the busy and influential, for the rich and powerful, as well as for the poor. A writer of the age of Justin Martyr expresses this clearly and elegantly:—

"Christians differ not," he says, "from other men, in country, or language, or customs. They do not live in any certain cities, or employ any particular dialect, or cultivate peculiar habits of life. They dwell in cities, Greek and barbarian, each where he finds himself placed; and while they submit to the fashion of their country in dress and food, and the general conduct of life,

still they maintain a system of interior polity, which, beyond all controversy, is admirable and strange. The countries they inhabit are their own, but they dwell like aliens. They marry, like other men, and do not exclude their children from their affections; their table is open to all around them; they live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh; they walk on earth, but their conversation is in heaven."—*Ad Diogn.* 5.

Yet, undeniable as it is, that there is never an obligation upon Christians in general to leave, and often an obligation against leaving, their worldly engagements and possessions, still it is as undeniable that such an abandonment is often praiseworthy, and in particular cases a duty. Our Saviour expressly told one, who was rich and young, "to sell all, and give to the poor;" and surely He does not speak in order to immortalize exceptions or extreme cases, or fugitive forms of argument, refutation, or censure. Even looking at the subject in a merely human light, one may pronounce it to be a narrow and shallow system, that Protestant philosophy, which forbids all the higher and more noble impulses of the mind, and forces men to eat, drink, and be merry, whether they will or no. But the mind of true

Christianity is expansive enough to admit high and low, rich and poor, one with another.

If the primitive Christians are to be trusted as witnesses of the genius of the Gospel system, certainly it is of that elastic and comprehensive character which removes the more powerful temptations to extravagance, by giving, as far as possible, a sort of indulgence to the feelings and motives which lead to it, correcting them the while, purifying them, and reining them in, ere they get excessive. Thus, whereas our reason naturally loves to expatiate at will to and fro through all subjects known and unknown, Catholicism does not oppress us with an irrational bigotry, prescribing to us the very minutest details of thought, so that a man can never have an opinion of his own; on the contrary, its creed is ever what it was, and never moves out of the ground which it originally occupied, and it is cautious and precise in its decisions, and distinguishes between things necessary and things pious to believe, between wilfulness and ignorance. At the same time, it asserts the supremacy of faith, the guilt of unbelief, and the divine mission of the Church; so that reason is brought round again and subdued to the obedience of

Christ, at the very time when it seems to be launching forth without chart upon the ocean of speculation. And it pursues the same course in matters of conduct. It opposes the intolerance of what are called "*sensible* Protestants." It is shocked at the tyranny of those who will not let a man do anything out of the way without stamping him with the name of a fanatic. It deals softly with the ardent and impetuous, saying, in effect—"My child, you may do as many great things as you will; but I have already made a list for you to select from. You are too docile to pursue ends merely because they are of your own choosing; you seek them because they are *great.* You wish to live above the common course of a Christian;—I can teach you to do this, yet without arrogance." Meanwhile the sensible Protestant divine keeps to his point, hammering away on his own ideas, urging every one to be as every one else, and moulding all minds upon his one small model; and when he has made his ground good to his own admiration, he finds that meanwhile half his flock have after all turned Wesleyans or Independents, by way of searching for something divine and transcendental.

These remarks are intended as introductory to some notice of the life of St. Antony, the first monk, who finished his work in Egypt just about the time that St. Basil was renewing that work in Asia Minor. The words "monk," "monastic," mean "solitary," and, if taken literally, certainly denote a mode of life, which is so far contrary to nature, as to require some special direction or inspiration for its adoption. Christ sent His Apostles by two and two; and surely He knew what was in man from the day that He said—"It is not good for him to be alone." So far, then, Antony's manner of life may be ill-fitted to be a rule for others; but his pattern in this respect was not adopted by his followers, who by their numbers were soon led to the formation of monastic societies, nay, who, after a while, entangled even Antony himself in the tie of becoming in a certain sense their religious head and teacher. Monachism consisting, not in solitariness, but in austerities, prayers, retirement, and obedience, had nothing in it, surely, but what was perfectly Christian, and, under circumstances, exemplary; especially when viewed in its connexion with the relative duties, which were soon afterwards appropriated to it, of being

almoner of the poor, of educating the clergy, and of defending the faith. In short, Monachism became, in a little while, nothing else than a peculiar department of the Christian ministry—a ministry not of the sacraments, but especially of the word and doctrine; not indeed by any formal ordination to it, for it was as yet a lay profession, but by the common right, or rather duty, which attaches to all of us to avow, propagate, and defend the truth, especially when our zeal for it has received the countenance and encouragement of our spiritual rulers.

St. Antony's life, written by his friend the great Athanasius, has come down to us. Some critics, indeed, doubt its genuineness, or consider it interpolated. Rivetus and others reject it; Du Pin decides, on the whole, that it is his, but with additions; the Benedictines and Tillemont ascribe it to him unhesitatingly. I conceive no question can be raised with justice about its *substantial* integrity; and on rising from the perusal of it, all candid readers will pronounce Antony a wonderful man. Enthusiastic he certainly must be accounted, according to English views of things; and had he lived a Protestant in this Protestant day, he would have been exposed

to a serious temptation of becoming a fanatic. Longing for some higher rule of life than any which the ordinary forms of society admit, and finding our present lines too rigidly drawn to include any character of mind that is much out of the way, any rule that is not "gentlemanlike," "comfortable," and "established," and hearing nothing of the Catholic Church, he might possibly have broken what he could not bend. The question is not, whether such impatience is not open to the charge of wilfulness and self-conceit; but whether, on the contrary, such special resignation to worldly comforts as we see around us, is not often the characteristic of nothing else than selfishness and sloth;—whether there are not minds with ardent feelings, keen imaginations, and undisciplined tempers, who are under a strong irritation prompting them to run wild,—whether it is not our duty (so to speak) to play with such, carefully letting out line enough lest they snap it,—and whether the Protestant Establishment is as indulgent and as wise as might be desired in its treatment of such persons, inasmuch as it provides no occupation for them, does not understand how to turn them to account, lets them run to waste, tempts them to dissent,

loses them, is weakened by the loss, and then denounces them.

But to return to Antony. Did I see him before me, I might be tempted, with my cut and dried opinions, and my matter-of-fact ways, and my selfishness and pusillanimity, to consider him somewhat of an enthusiast; but what I desire to point out to the reader, and especially to the Protestant, is the subdued and Christian form which was taken by his enthusiasm, if it must be so called. It was not vulgar, bustling, imbecile, unstable, undutiful; it was calm and composed, manly, intrepid, magnanimous, full of affectionate loyalty to the Church and to the Truth.

Antony was born A.D. 251, while Origen was still alive, while Cyprian was bishop of Carthage, Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, and Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neocæsarea; he lived till A.D. 356, to the age of 105, when Athanasius was battling with the Emperor Constantius, nine years after the birth of St. Chrysostom, and two years after that of St. Augustine. He was an Egyptian by birth, and the son of noble, opulent, and Christian parents. He was brought up as a Christian, and, from his boyhood, showed a strong disposition towards a solitary life. Shrinking from the

society of his equals, and despising the external world in comparison of the world within him, he set himself against what is considered a liberal education—that is, the study of philosophy and of foreign languages. At the same time he was very dutiful to his parents, simple and self-denying in his habits, and attentive to the sacred services and readings of the Church.

Before he arrived at man's estate he had lost both his parents, and was left with a sister, who was a child, and an ample inheritance. His mind, at this time, was earnestly set upon imitating the Apostles, and their converts, who gave up their possessions and followed Christ. One day, about six months after his parents' death, as he went to church, as usual, the subject pressed seriously upon him. The Gospel of the day happened to contain the text—"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast." Antony applied it to himself, and acted upon it. He had three hundred acres,* of especial fertility, even for Egypt; these he at once made over to the use of the poor of his own neighbourhood. Next, he turned into money all his personal property, and reserving a portion for

* *Arura*—three quarters of an English acre.—*Gibbon.*

his sister's use, gave the rest to the poor. After a while he was struck by hearing in church the text—"Be not solicitous for to-morrow;" and considering he had not yet fully satisfied the Evangelical counsel, he gave away what he had reserved, placing his sister in the care of some women, who had devoted themselves to the single state.

He commenced his ascetic life, according to the custom then observed, by retiring to a place not far from his own home. Here he remained for a while to steady and fix his mind in his new habits, and to gain what advice he could towards the perfect formation of them, from such as had already engaged in the like object. This is a remarkable trait, as Athanasius records it, as showing how little he was influenced by self-will or a sectarian spirit in what he was doing, how ardently he pursued an ascetic life as in itself good, and how willing he was to become the servant of any who might give him directions in pursuing it. But this will be best shown by an extract:—

"There was, in the next village, an aged man who had lived a solitary life from his youth. Antony, seeing him, 'was zealous in a good thing,' and first of all adopted a similar retire-

ment in the neighbourhood of the village. And did he hear of any zealous person anywhere, he would go and seek him out, like a wise man; not returning home till he had seen him, and gained from him some stock, as it were, for his journey towards holiness. He laboured with his hands, according to the words—'If anyone will not work, neither let him eat;' laying out part of his produce in bread, part on the poor. He prayed continually, having learned that it is a duty to pray in private without ceasing. So attentive, indeed, was he to sacred reading, that he let no part of the Scripture fall from him to the ground, but retained all, memory serving in place of book. In this way he gained the affections of all; he, in turn, subjecting himself sincerely to the zealous men whom he visited, and marking down, in his own thoughts, the special attainment of each in zeal and ascetic life—the refined manners of one, another's continuance in prayer, the meekness of a third, the kindness of a fourth, the long vigils of a fifth, the studiousness of a sixth. This one had a marvellous gift of endurance, that of fasting and sleeping on the ground; this was gentle, that long-suffering; and in one and all he noted the devotion

towards Christ, and love one towards another. Thus furnished, he returned to his own ascetic retreat, henceforth combining in himself their separate exercises, and zealously minded to exemplify them all. This, indeed, was his only point of emulation with those of his own age, viz. that he might not come off second to them in good things; and this he so pursued as to annoy no one, rather to make all take delight in him. Accordingly, all the villagers of the place, and religious persons who were acquainted with him, seeing him such, called him God's beloved, and cherished him as a son or as a brother."—§ 4.

Of course this account is the mere relation of a fact; but, over and above its historical character, it evidently is meant as the description of a type of character which both the writer and those for whom he wrote thought eminently Christian. Taking it then as being, in a certain line, the *beau ideal* of what Protestants would call the enthusiasm of the time, I would request of them to compare it with the sort of religion into which the unhappy enthusiast of the present day is precipitated by the high and dry system of the Establishment; and he will see how much

was gained to Christianity, in purity, as well as unity, by that monastic system, the place of which in this country is filled by methodism and dissent.

After a while, our youth's enthusiasm began to take its usual course. His spirits fell, his courage flagged; a reaction followed, and the temptations of the world which he had left assaulted him with a violence which showed that as yet he had not mastered the full meaning of his profession. Had he been nothing more than an enthusiast, he would have gone back to the world. His abandoned property, the guardianship of his sister, his family connexions, the conveniences of wealth, worldly reputation, disgust of the sameness and coarseness of his food, bodily infirmity, the tediousness of his mode of living, and the painfulness of idleness, presented themselves before his imagination, and became instruments of temptation. Other and fiercer assaults arose. However, his faith rose above them all, or rather, as Athanasius says, "not himself, but the grace of God that was in him." His biographer proceeds:—

"Such was Antony's first victory over the devil, or rather the Saviour's glorious achieve-

ment in him, 'who hath condemned sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.' Not, however, as if Antony, fancying the devil was subdued, was neglectful afterwards, and secure; knowing from the Scriptures that there are many devices of the enemy, he was persevering in his ascetic life. He was the more earnest in chastising his body, and bringing it into subjection, lest, triumphing in some things, in others he might be brought low. His vigils were often through the whole night. He ate but once in the day, after sunset; sometimes after two days, often after four: his food was bread and salt,—his drink, water only. He never had more than a mat to sleep on, but generally lay down on the ground. He put aside oil for anointing, saying that the youthful ought to be forward in their asceticism, and, instead of seeking what might relax the body, to accustom it to hardships, remembering the Apostle's words—'When I am weak, then am I powerful.' He thought it unsuitable to measure either holy living, or retirement for the sake of it, by length of time; but by the earnest desire

and deliberate resolve of being holy. Accordingly, he never himself used to take any account of the time gone by; but, day by day, as if ever fresh beginning his exercise, he made still greater efforts to advance, repeating to himself continually the saying of the Apostle, 'forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before.' "—§ 7.

Such was his life for about fifteen years. At the end of this time, being now thirty-five, he betook himself to the desert, having first spent some days in prayers and holy exercises in the tombs. Here, however, we are necessarily introduced to another subject, which has already entered into Athanasius's text, though it has not been necessary to notice it,—his alleged conflicts with the evil spirits; to it, then, let us proceed.

It is quite certain, then, that Antony believed himself to be subjected to sensible and visible conflicts with evil spirits. It would not be consistent with our present argument to rescue him from the imputation of enthusiasm: he must be here considered an enthusiast, else I cannot make use of him; the very drift of my account of him being to show how enthusiasm is sobered

and refined by being submitted to the discipline of the Church, instead of being allowed to run wild externally to it. I say, if he were not an enthusiast, or at least in danger of being such, we should lose one chief instruction which his life conveys. To maintain, however, that he was an enthusiast, is far from settling the question to which the narrative of his spiritual conflicts gives rise; so I shall first make some extracts descriptive of them, and then comment upon them.

The following is the account of his visit to the tombs:—

"Thus bracing himself after the pattern of Elias, he set off to the tombs, which were some distance from his village; and giving directions to an acquaintance to bring him bread after some days' interval, he entered into one of them, suffered himself to be shut in, and remained there by himself. This the enemy not enduring, yea, rather dreading, lest before long he should engross the desert also with his holy exercise, assaulted him one night with a host of spirits, and so lashed him, that he lay speechless on the ground from the torture, which, he declared, was far more severe than from strokes which man could inflict. But, by God's Providence, who

does not overlook those who hope in Him, on the next day his acquaintance came with the bread; and, on opening the door, saw him lying on the ground as if dead. Whereupon he carried him to the village church, and laid him on the ground; and many of his relations and the villagers took their places by the body, as if he were already dead. However, about midnight his senses returned, and collecting himself, he observed that they were all asleep except his aforesaid acquaintance; whereupon he beckoned him to his side, and asked of him, without waking any of them, to carry him back again to the tombs.

"The man took him back: and when he was shut in, as before, by himself, being unable to stand from his wounds, he lay down, and began to pray. Then he cried out loudly, 'Here am I, Antony; I do not shun your blows. Though ye add to them, yet nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ.' And then he began to sing, 'If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear.' The devil has no trouble in devising diverse shapes of evil. During the night, therefore, the evil ones made so great a tumult, that the whole place seemed to

be shaken, and, as if they broke down the four walls of the building, they seemed to rush in in the form of wild beasts and reptiles. . . .. But Antony, though scourged and pierced, felt indeed his bodily pain, but the rather kept vigil in his soul. So, as he lay groaning in body, yet a watcher in his mind, he spoke in taunt—'Had ye any power, one of you would be enough to assail me; you try, if possible, to frighten me with your number, because the Lord has spoiled you of your strength. Those pretended forms are the proofs of your impotence. Our seal and wall of defence is faith in our Lord.' After many attempts, then, they gnashed their teeth at him, because they were rather making themselves a sport than him. But the Lord a second time remembered the conflict of Antony, and came to his help. Raising his eyes, he saw the roof as if opening, and a beam of light descending towards him; suddenly the devils vanished, his pain ceased, and the building was whole again. Upon this Antony said, 'Where art Thou, Lord? why didst Thou not appear at the first, to ease my pain?' A voice answered, 'Antony, I was here, but waited to see thy bearing in the contest; since, therefore, thou

hast sustained and not been worsted, I will be to thee an aid for ever, and I will make thy name famous in every place.' "—§ 9, 10.

After this preliminary vigil, Antony made for the desert, where he spent the next twenty years in solitude. Athanasius gives the following account of his life there:—

"The following day he left the tombs, and his piety becoming still more eager, he went to the old man before mentioned, and prayed him to accompany him into the desert. When he declined by reason of his age and the novelty of the proposal, he set off for the mountain by himself and finding beyond the river a strong place, deserted so long a while that venomous reptiles abounded there, he went thither, and took possession of it, they farther retreating, as if one pursued them. Blocking up the entrance, and laying in bread for six months (as the Thebans are wont, often keeping their bread a whole year), and having a well of water indoors, he remained, as if in a shrine, neither going abroad himself, nor seeing any of those who came to him. . . . He did not allow his acquaintance to enter; so, while they remained often days and nights without, they used to hear noises within;

blows, pitiable cries, such as 'Depart from our realm! what part hast thou in the desert? thou shalt perforce yield to our devices.' At first they thought he was in dispute with some men who had entered by means of ladders; but when they had contrived to peep in through a chink, and saw no one, then they reckoned it was devils that they heard, and, in terror, called Antony. He cared for them more than for the spirits, and coming at once near the door, bade them go away and not fear; 'for,' he said, 'the devils make all this feint to alarm the timid. Ye, then, sign yourselves, and depart in confidence, and let them mock their ownselves.' "—§ 12, 13.

To enter into the state of opinion and feeling which such accounts imply, it is necessary to observe, that, as regards the Church's warfare with the devil, the primitive Christians, as Catholics since, considered themselves to be similarly circumstanced with the Apostles. They did not draw a line, as is the fashion with Protestants, between the condition of the Church in their day and in the first age, but believed that what she had been, such she was still in her trials and in her powers; that the open assaults of Satan,

and their own means of repelling them, were such as they are described in the Gospels. Exorcism was a sacred function with them, and the energumen took his place with catechumens and penitents, as in the number of those who had the especial prayers, and were allowed some of the privileges, of the Christian body. Our Saviour speaks of the power of exorcising as depending on fasting and prayer, in certain special cases, and thus distinctly countenances the notion of a direct conflict between the Christian athlete and the powers of evil,—a conflict, carried on, on the side of the former, by definite weapons, for definite ends, and not that indirect warfare merely which an ordinary religious course of life implies. "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Surely none of Christ's words are chance words; He spoke *with a purpose*, and the Holy Spirit guided the Evangelists in their selection of them *with a purpose;* and if so, this text is a rule and an admonition, and was acted upon as such by the primitive Christians, whether from their received principles of interpretation or the traditionary practice of the Church.

In like manner, whether from their mode of

interpreting Scripture, or from the opinions and practices which came down to them, they conceived the devil to be allowed that power over certain brute animals which Scripture sometimes assigns to him. He is known on one memorable occasion to have taken the form of a serpent; at another time, a legion of devils possessed a herd of swine. These instances may, for what we know, be revealed *specimens* of a whole side of the Divine Dispensation, viz. the interference of spiritual agencies, good and bad, with the course of the world, under which, perhaps, the speaking of Balaam's ass falls; and the early Christians, whether so understanding Scripture, or from their traditionary system, acted as if they really were such specimens. They considered that brute nature was widely subjected to the power of spirits; as, on the other hand, there had been a time when even the Creator Spirit had condescended to manifest Himself in the bodily form of a dove. Their notions concerning local demoniacal influences as existing in oracles and idols, in which they were sanctioned by Scripture, confirmed this belief. Accordingly, they took passages like the following literally, and used them as a corroborative proof: "Behold, I have

given you power to tread upon *serpents* and *scorpions*, and upon all the power of the enemy." "They shall take up *serpents*, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring *lion*, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." "I saw three unclean spirits, like *frogs* . . . they are the spirits of devils, working signs." Add to these, Daniel's vision of the four beasts; and the description of leviathan, in the book of Job, which was interpreted of the evil spirit.

Moreover, there is a ground of deep philosophy on which such notions may be based, and which appears to have been held by these primitive Christians; viz., that visible things are types and earnests of things invisible. The elements are, in some sense, symbols and tokens of spiritual agents, good and bad. Satan is called the prince of this air. Still more mysterious than inanimate nature is the family of brute animals, whose limbs and organs are governed by some motive principle unknown. Surely there is nothing abstractedly absurd in considering certain hideous developments of nature as tokens of the presence of the unseen author of evil, as soon as we once admit that he exists. Certainly the

sight of a beast of prey, with his malevolent passions, savage cruelty, implacable rage, malice, cunning, sullenness, restlessness, brute hunger, irresistible strength, though there cannot be sin in any of these qualities themselves, awakens very awful and complicated musings in a religious mind. Thus a philosophical view of nature would be considered, in the times I speak of, to corroborate the method of Scripture interpretation which those same times adopted.

But, moreover, Scripture itself seemed, in the parallel case of demoniacs, to become its own interpreter. It was notorious that in the Apostolic age devils made human beings their organs; why, then, much more, should not brute beasts be such? The simple question was, whether the state of things in the third century was substantially the same as it was in the first; and this, I say, the early Christians *assumed* in the affirmative, and certainly, whether they were judges of this question or not, I suppose they were as good judges as Protestants are. The case of demoniacs should be carefully considered, since their sufferings often seem to have been neither more nor less than what would now be hastily attributed to natural diseases, and would

be treated by medical rules. The demoniac whom the Apostles could not cure had certain symptoms which in another would have been called epileptic. Again, the woman who was bowed together for eighteen years, and was cured by Christ, is expressly said to have had "a spirit of infirmity," to have been "bound by Satan." If, then, what looks like disease may sometimes be the token of demoniacal presence and power, though ordinarily admitting of medical treatment, why is it an objection to the connexion of the material or animal world with spirits, that the laws of mineral agents, or the peculiarities of brute natures, can also be drawn out into system on paper, and can ordinarily be anticipated and reckoned on by our knowledge of it? The same objection lies, nay avails, against the one and the other. The very same scoffing temper which rejects the teaching of the Church, primitive and modern, concerning Satan's power, as "Pagan," "Oriental," and the like, does actually assail the inspired statements respecting it also, explains away demoniacal possessions as unreal, and maintains that Christ and His Apostles spoke by way of accommodation, and in the language of their day, when they said that

Satan bound us with diseases and plagues, and was "prince of the power of this air."

Dreams are another department of our present state of being, through which, as Scripture informs us, the Supernatural sometimes acts; and in the same general way; *i.e.* not always, and by ascertainable rules, but by the virtue of occasional, though real, connexion with them.

On the whole then, I am led to conclude that, supposing I found a narrative, such as Antony's, of *the Apostles' age*, it would be sufficiently agreeable to the narratives of Scripture to make me dismiss from my mind all *antecedent* difficulties in believing it. On the other hand, did the miracle of the swine occur in the life of St. Antony, I venture to maintain that men of this scientific day would not merely suspend their judgment, or pronounce it improbable (which they might have a right to do), but would at once, and peremptorily, pronounce it altogether incredible and false: so as to make it appear that

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

I have no wish to trifle, or argue with subtlety upon a very deep subject. This earth had

become Satan's kingdom; our Lord came to end his usurpation; but Satan retreated only inch by inch. The Church of Christ is hallowed ground, but external to it is the kingdom of darkness. Many serious persons think that the evil powers have, even now, extraordinary powers in heathen lands, to say nothing of the remains of their ancient dominion in countries now Christian. There are strange stories told in heathen lands of sorcerers and the like. Nay, how strange are the stories which only in half-heathen, or even Christian places, have come perhaps to our own knowledge! How unaccountable to him who has met with them are the sudden sounds, the footsteps, and the noises which he has heard in solitary places, or when in company with others!

These things being considered, were I a candid Protestant, I would judge of Antony's life thus:—I should say: "There may be enthusiasm here; there may be, at times, exaggerations and misconceptions of what, as they really happened, meant nothing. And still, it may be true also that that conflict, begun by our Lord when He was interrogated and assaulted by Satan, was continued in the experience of Antony, who lived

not so very long after Him. How far the evil spirit acted, how far he was really present in material forms, how far on the other hand was dream, how far imagination, is little to the purpose. I see, any how, the root of a great truth here, and think that those are wiser who admit something than those who deny every thing. I see Satan frightened at the invasions of the Church upon his kingdom; I see him dispossessed by fasting and prayer, as was predicted; I see him retreating step by step; and I see him doing his utmost in whatever way to resist. Nor is there anything uncongenial to the Gospel system, that so direct a war, with such definite weapons, should be waged upon him; a war which has not the ordinary duties of life and of society for its subject-matter and instruments. That text about fasting and prayer is a canon in sanction of it: our Saviour too Himself was forty days in the wilderness; and St. Peter at Joppa, and St. John at Patmos, show us that duties of this world may be providentially suspended under the Gospel, and a direct intercourse with the next world may be opened upon the Christian."

And if so much be allowed, certainly there

is nothing in Antony's life to make us suspicious of him personally. His doctrine surely was pure and unimpeachable; and his temper is high and heavenly,—without cowardice, without gloom, without formality, and without self-complacency. Superstition is abject and crouching, it is full of thoughts of guilt; it distrusts God, and dreads the powers of evil. Antony at least has nothing of this, being full of holy confidence, divine peace, cheerfulness, and valorousness, be he (as some men may judge) ever so much an enthusiast. But on this subject I shall say something in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANTONY IN CALM.

"The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily. And that which was dry land shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the dens where dragons dwelt before, shall rise up the verdure of the reed and the bulrush."

I HAVE said enough about St. Antony's history; let me now introduce the reader to his character, which I shall best do by setting before him some unconnected passages, as they occur in the narrative of his life.

It is remarkable that his attempts at curing diseases were not always successful; his prayers being *experimental*, not, as in the case of the Apostles, immediately suggested by the same Power which was about miraculously to manifest Itself. Of course there were then in the Church, as at all times, extraordinary and heavenly gifts; but still they were distinct from

those peculiar powers which we ascribe to the Apostles, as immediate ministers of the Revelation.

"He united in sympathy and prayer with those who were in suffering," says Athanasius, "and *often*, and in many cases, the Lord heard him. When heard, he did not boast; *when unsuccessful*, he did not murmur; but, under all circumstances, he gave thanks himself to the Lord, and exhorted the sufferers to be patient, and be assured that their cure was out of the power of himself, and indeed of any man, and lay with God only, *who wrought when He would, and towards whom He chose.* The patients in consequence accepted *even the words* of the old man as a medicine, learning themselves not to despise the means, but rather to be patient, while those who were healed were instructed not to give thanks to Antony, but to God only." —§ 56.

This passage deserves notice also, as showing the unvarnished character of the narrative. Superstitious and fabulous histories are not candid enough to admit such failures as are implied in it. The following is to the same purpose. He was asked to allow a paralytic female and her

parents to visit him, with the hope of a cure, and he refused, on the ground that, if her life was to be preserved, her own prayers might be efficacious without him.

"'Go,' he humbly answered, 'and, *unless she be dead already*, you will find her cured. This happy event is not my doing, that she should come to me, a miserable man, to secure it; but the cure is from the Saviour, who shows mercy *in every place*, on those who call upon Him. *To her prayers*, then, the Lord has been gracious; to me is but revealed, by His loving-kindness, that He means to cure her where she is.'"—§ 58.

Antony held that faith had power with God for any work: and he took delight in contrasting with this privilege of exercising faith that poor measure of knowledge which is all that sight and reason open on us at the utmost. He seems to have felt there was a divine spirit and power in Christianity such as irresistibly to commend it to religious and honest minds, coming home to the heart with the same conviction which any high moral precept carries with it, and leaving argumentation behind as comparatively useless, except by way of curiously inves-

tigating motives and reasons for the satisfaction of the philosophical analyst. And then, when faith was once in operation, it was the instrument of gaining the knowledge of truths which reason could but feebly presage, or could not even have imagined.

Some philosophers came to discourse with him; he says to them:

"'Since you prefer to insist on demonstrative argument, and, being skilled in the science of it, would have us also refrain from worshipping God without a demonstrative argument, tell me first, how is the knowledge of things in general, and especially of religion, absolutely ascertained? Is it by a demonstration of argument, or through an operative power of faith? And which of the two will you put first?" They said, Faith, owning that it was absolute knowledge. Then Antony rejoined, 'Well said, for faith results from a disposition of the soul; but dialectics are from the science of the disputant. They, then, who possess the operative power of faith, can supersede, nay, are but cumbered with demonstration in argument; for what we apprehend by faith, you are merely endeavouring to arrive at by argument, and sometimes

cannot even express what we apprehend. Faith, then, which operates, is better and surer than your subtle syllogisms.' "—§ 77.

Again:

"'Instead of demonstrating in the persuasive arguments of Gentile wisdom, as our Teacher says, we persuade by faith, which vividly anticipates a process of argument.' "—§ 80.

After curing some demoniacs with the sign of the cross, he adds:

"'Why wonder ye at this? It is not we who do it, but Christ, by means of those who believe on Him. Do ye too believe, and ye shall see that our religion lies not in some science of argument, but in faith, which operates through love towards Jesus Christ; which if ye attained, ye too would no longer seek for demonstrations drawn from argument, but would account faith in Christ all-sufficient.' "—*Ibid.*

Antony, as we have already seen, is far from boasting of his spiritual attainments:

"It is not right to glory in casting out devils, nor in curing diseases, nor to make much of him only who casts out devils, and to undervalue him who does not. On the contrary, study the ascetic life of this man and that, and

either imitate and emulate or improve it. For to do miracles is not ours, but the Saviour's; wherefore He said to His disciples, 'Rejoice not that spirits are subject unto you,' &c. To those who take confidence, not in holiness but in miracles, and say, 'Lord, did we not cast out devils in Thy name?' He makes answer, 'I never knew you,' for the Lord does not acknowledge the ways of the ungodly. On the whole, then, we must pray for the gift of discerning spirits, that, as it is written, we may not believe every spirit."—§ 38.

In like manner he dissuades his hearers from seeking the gift of prophecy; in which he remarkably differs from heathen ascetics, such as the Neo-platonists, who considered a knowledge of the secret principles of nature the great reward of their austerities.

"What is the use of hearing beforehand from the evil ones, what is to happen? Or, why be desirous of such knowledge, even though it be true? It does not make us better men; nor is it a token of religious excellence at all. None of us is judged for what he does not know, nor accounted happy for his learning and acquirements; but in each case the question is this,

whether or not he has kept the faith, and honestly obeyed the commandments? Wherefore we must not account these as great matters, nor live ascetically for the sake of them—viz. in order to know the future; but to please God by a good conversation. But if we are anxious at all to foresee what is to be, it is necessary to be pure in mind. Certainly I believe that that soul which is clean on every side, and established in its highest nature, becomes keen-sighted, and is able to see things more and further than the devils, having the Lord to reveal them to it. Such was the soul of Eliseus, which witnessed Giezi's conduct, and discerned the heavenly hosts which were present with it."—§ 34.

These extracts have incidentally furnished some evidence of the calmness, and I may say coolness of Antony's judgment—*i. e.* waiving the question of the truth of the principles and facts from which he starts. I am aware that an objector would urge that this is the very peculiarity of aberrations of the intellect, to reason correctly upon false premisses; and that Antony in no way differs from many men nowadays, whom we consider unable to take care of themselves. Yet surely, when we are examining the

evidence for the divine mission of the Apostles, we do think it allowable to point out their good sense and composure of mind, though they assume premisses as Antony does. And, considering how extravagant and capricious the conduct of enthusiasts commonly is, how rude their manners, how inconstant their resolutions, how variable their principles, it is certainly a recommendation to our solitary to find him so grave, manly, considerate, and refined,—or, to speak familiarly, so gentlemanlike, in the true sense of that word. We see something of this in the account which Athanasius gives us of his personal appearance after his twenty years' seclusion, which has nothing of the gaunt character, or the uncouth expression, of one who had thrown himself out of the society of his fellow-men. I shall be obliged to make a long extract, if I begin; and yet I cannot help hoping that the reader will be pleased to have it.

"He had now spent nearly twenty years exercising himself thus by himself, neither going abroad nor being seen for any time by any one. But at this date, many longing to copy his ascetic life, and acquaintances coming and forcibly breaking down and driving in the door,

Antony came forth as from some shrine, fully perfect in its mysteries, and instinct with God. This was his first appearance outside the enclosure, and those who had come to see him were struck with surprise at the little change his person had undergone, having neither a full habit, as being without exercise, nor the shrivelled character which betokens fasts and conflicts with the evil ones. He was the same as they had known him before his retreat. His mind also was serene, neither narrowed by sadness nor relaxed by indulgence, neither overmerry nor melancholy. He showed no confusion at the sight of the multitude, no elation at their respectful greetings. The Lord gave him grace in speech, so that he comforted many who were in sorrow, and reconciled those who were at variance, adding in every case, that they ought to set nothing of this world before love towards Christ. And while he conversed with the people, and exhorted them to remember the bliss to come, and God's loving-kindness to us men in not sparing His own Son, but giving Him up for us all, he persuaded many to choose the monastic life. And from that time monasteries have been raised among the mountains, and the

desert is made a city by monks leaving their all and enrolling themselves in the heavenly citizenship.

"One day, going forth, when all the monks were collected about him, and begged him to discourse to them, he spoke as follows, in the Egyptian language:—

"Holy Scripture is sufficient for teaching, yet it is good to exhort one another in the faith, and refresh one another with our discourses. You then, as children, bring hither to your father whatever you have learned; and I in turn, as being your elder, will now impart to you what I have experienced. Let this preëminently be the common purpose of every one of you, not to give in when once you have begun, not to faint in your toil, not to say, 'We have been long enough at these exercises.' Rather, as though, day after day, we were beginning for the first time, let our zeal grow stronger; for even the whole of human life is very short compared with eternity, or rather nothing. And every thing in this world has its price, and you get no more than an equivalent; yet the promise of everlasting life is bought at a trifling purchase. 'The days of our years are three score and ten years,' as Scripture

says, 'and if, in the strong, they be four score;' yet, did we persist in our exercises for the whole four score, or for a hundred, this would not be the measure of our reign in glory. Instead of a hundred years, we shall reign for ages upon ages; not upon this poor earth upon which is our struggle, but our promised inheritance is in heaven. We lose a corruptible body to receive it back incorruptible.

"Wherefore, my children, let us not weary, nor think we have been a long while toiling, or that we are doing any great thing; for our present sufferings are not to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. Let us not look at the world, or reckon we have made great sacrifices, for even the whole earth is but a small spot compared to the expanse of heaven. Though we had possessed it all, and had given it all up, it is nothing to the kingdom of heaven. It is no more than a man's making little of one copper coin in order to gain a hundred gold ones; thus he who is lord of the whole earth, and bids it farewell, does but give up little and gains a hundredfold. But if the whole earth be so little, what is it to leave a few acres? or a house? or a store of gold? Surely we should

not boast or be dejected upon such a sacrifice. If we do not let these things go for virtue's sake, at death at length we shall leave them, and often to whom we would not, as says Ecclesiastes. What gain is it to acquire what we cannot carry away with us? Far different are prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, understanding, charity, love of the poor, faith towards Christ, gentleness, hospitality; obtain we these, and we shall find them there before us, making ready a dwelling for us in the country of the meek.

"Let us, then, apply ourselves to our religious exercise, and not be downcast. We have the Lord to work with us, as it is written. It is well to study the Apostle's saying, 'I die daily.' We shall not sin if we live so as to be dying daily; that is, if we rise as though we should not last till evening, and go to rest as though we should not rise; life being of an uncertain nature, doled out by Providence from day to day. Thus we shall be ever militant and looking forward for the day of judgment; and this more urgent fear and peril of torment will ever rid pleasure of its sweetness, and restore the wavering soul.

"Therefore, having now set out upon the path

of virtue, let us rather stretch forward to what is before. Be not alarmed when you hear speak of virtue, nor feel towards the name as if you were strangers to it; for it is not far from us, it is not external to us; the work is in us, and the thing is easy, if we have but the will. Greeks travel beyond the sea to learn letters,—we need not travel for the kingdom of heaven, or cross the sea for virtue. Christ anticipates us, 'The kingdom of heaven (He says) is within you;' virtue needs but the will.

"We have able and subtle enemies, the evil spirits; with these we must wrestle, as the Apostle says. There is need of much prayer and self-discipline to gain, through the Holy Spirit, the gift of discerning of spirits, to detect their nature, viz. which of them are the less abandoned, which the more, what is the aim of each, what each affects, and how each is overthrown and ejected. When the Lord came on earth, the enemy fell, and his power waxed weak; therefore, as being a tyrant, though powerless, he keeps not quiet even in his fall, but threats, for he can do no more. Let each of you consider this, and he may scorn the evil spirits. Behold, we are here met together and

speak against them, and they know that, as we make progress, they will grow feebler. Had they then leave, they would suffer none of us Christians to live; had they power, they would not come on with a noise, or put forth phantoms, or change their shapes to further their plans; one of them would be enough, did he come, to do what he could and wished to do. Such as have power do not make a display in order to kill another, nor alarm by noises, but use their power to effect at once what they wish. But evil spirits, since they can do nothing, are but as actors in a play, changing their appearance and frightening children by their tumult and their make-belief; whereas the true Angel of the Lord, sent by Him against the Assyrians, needed not tumult, appearance, noise, or clatter, but, in that quiet exercise of his power, he slew at once a hundred four score and five thousand. But the devils have not power even over the swine: much less over man made in God's image."—§ 14—29.

What can be more calm, more fearless, more noble than his bearing in this passage? Call his life a romance, if you think fit; still, I say, at least, we have in the narrative the ideal of a

monk, according to the teaching of the fourth century. You cannot say that Antony was a savage self-tormentor, an ostentatious dervise; that he had aught of pomposity or affectation, aught of cunning and hypocrisy. According to Athanasius's description — who was personally acquainted with him—

"His countenance had a great and extraordinary beauty in it. This was a gift from the Saviour; for, if he was in company with a number of monks, and any stranger wished to have a sight of him, directly that he came to them, he would pass by the rest, and run to Antony, as being attracted by his appearance. Not that he was taller or larger than others; but there was a peculiar composure of manner and purity of soul in him. For, being unruffled in soul, all his outward expressions of feeling were free from perturbation also; so that the joy of his soul made his very face cheerful, and from the gestures of the body might be understood the composure of his soul, according to the text, 'A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by grief of mind the spirit is cast down.' Thus Jacob detected Laban's treachery, and said to his wives, 'I see your father's counte-

nance, that it is not towards me as yesterday.' Thus Samuel, too, discovered David; for he had beaming eyes, and teeth white as milk. In like manner one might recognise Antony; for he was never agitated, his soul being in a deep calm,—never changed countenance, from his inward joyfulness."—§ 67.

His own words assign one of the causes of this tranquillity. He says:

"The vision granted us of the holy ones is not tumultuous; for 'He shall not contend, nor cry out,' nor shall any one hear their voice. So quietly and gently does it come, that the soul is straightway filled with joy, exultation, and confidence, knowing that the Lord is with them, who is our joy, and God the Father's power. And its thoughts are preserved from tumult and tempest; so that, being itself illuminated fully, it is able of itself to contemplate the beings that appear before it. A longing after divine and future things takes possession of it, till it desires altogether to be joined unto them, and to depart with them. Nay, and if there be some who, from the infirmity of man, dread the sight of these good ones, such apparitions remove their alarm at once by their love, as Gabriel did to

Zacharias, and the Angel at the divine tomb to the women, and that other who said to the shepherds in the Gospel, 'Fear not.'"—§ 35.

Such sentiments, beautiful as they are, might in another be ascribed to mere mysticism; but not so in the case of Antony, considering his constant profession and practice of self-denying and active virtue, and the plain practical sense of his exhortations. He took a vigorous part in the religious controversies of his day, reverencing the authorities of the Church, and strenuously opposing both the Meletian schismatics, and the Arians. The following is an account of another of his interviews with heathen philosophers. They came with the hope of jeering at his ignorance of literature:

"Antony said to them, 'What do you say? which is prior, the mind or letters? And which gives rise to which, mind to letters, or letters to mind?' When they answered that mind was prior, and invented letters, Antony replied, 'He, then, whose mind is in health, does not need letters.' This answer struck all who were present, as well as the philosophers. They went away surprised that an uneducated man should show such understanding. For, indeed, he had no-

thing of the wildness of one who had lived and grown old on a mountain; but was polished in his manners, and a man of the world."—§ 73.

It has sometimes been objected, that hagiographists commonly fail in point of dignity, in the miracles which they introduce into their histories. I am not called here to consider the force of this objection; but Antony at least is clear of the defect; had his miracles and visions been ascribed to St. Peter or St. Paul, I conceive they would not have been questioned, evidence being supposed. For instance:

"Once, when he was going to take food, having stood up to pray, about the ninth hour, he felt himself carried away in spirit, and, strange to say, he saw himself, as if out of himself, while he stood looking on, and borne into the air by certain beings. Next, he saw some hateful and terrible shapes, stationed in the air, and stopping the way to prevent his passing on. His conductors resisted, but they asked whether he was not impeachable. But on their beginning to reckon up from his birth, his conductors interrupted them, saying, 'The Lord has wiped out all his earlier sins; but a reckoning may lawfully be made from the time he became

a monk, and promised himself to God.' His accusers hereupon began; but, when they could prove nothing, the way became clear and open; and immediately he found himself returned, as it were, to himself, and forming with himself one Antony as before. Then forgetting his meal, he remained the rest of that day, and the whole of the following night, groaning and praying; for he was astonished at finding against how many we have to wrestle, and by what an effort we must pass through the air heavenward. He remembered that this is what the Apostle said, 'the prince of the power of this air,'—and his special exhortation in consequence, 'Put on the panoply of God, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day.' When we heard it, we called to mind the Apostle's words, 'Whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth.' "—§ 65.

Again:

"He had had a discussion with some persons, who had come to him, concerning the passage of the soul, and the abode which was allotted to it. On the following night, some one calls him from above in these words, 'Antony, rise, go forth, and behold.' Accordingly

he went forth, knowing whom he should obey, and, looking up, he saw a huge something, unsightly and horrid, standing and reaching up to the clouds, and beings were ascending as if with wings, and it was catching at them with its hands. Of these, it brought some to a stand; while others, flying past it, went upwards without further trouble. In such cases, that huge monster would gnash its teeth; rejoicing, on the other hand, over those whom it cast down. Immediately Antony heard a voice, saying, 'Look, and understand.' And his mind was opened, and he comprehended that he saw the passage of souls, and the enemy, envious of the faithful, seizing and stopping those whom he had an advantage over, but foiled in his attempts upon those who had not obeyed him. After this vision, taking it as a warning, he made still more strenuous efforts to advance forward daily."—§ 66.

Once more:

"Once, when he was sitting and working, he fell into a trance, and groaned much at the sight he saw. After a while, he turned to those who were with him groaning, and prayed with much trembling, remaining a long time on his

knees. When, at length, he rose, the old man began to weep. His friends, trembling and in great alarm themselves, begged to know what it was, and urged him till he was forced to tell. 'O, my children,' he said at length, with a deep sigh, 'it were better to die before that vision is fulfilled.' On their pressing him, he continued with tears, 'Wrath is about to overtake the Church, which is to be given over to men like irrational brutes. For I saw the table of the Lord's house hemmed in by mules, who were striking about with their hoofs at every thing within, as is the way with unmannered beasts. You see, now, why I groaned so much; for I heard a voice, saying, My altar shall be polluted.' This the old man saw; two years after, the assault of the Arians took place, when the churches were plundered, and the sacred vessels given to heathens to carry off, and heathens from the workshops compelled to attend the holy meetings with them, and in their presence wanton insults offered to the Lord's table."—§ 82.

At length the hour came for him to die; and Antony and his monks made their respective preparations for it. The narrative runs thus:

"The brethren urging him to remain with them, and there finish his course, he would not hear of it, as for other reasons, which were evident, even though he did not mention them, so especially because of the custom of the Egyptians in respect to the dead. For the bodies of good men, especially of the holy martyrs, they used to enfold in linen cloths; and, instead of burying, to place them upon biers, and keep them within their houses, thinking thus to honour the departed. Antony had applied even to bishops on this subject, begging them to admonish their people; and had urged it upon laymen, and had rebuked women, saying, that the practice was consistent neither with received rule, nor at all with religion. 'The bodies of patriarchs and prophets are preserved to this day in sepulchres; and the Lord's body itself was laid in a tomb, and a stone at the entrance kept it hidden till He rose the third day.' By such arguments he showed the irregularity of not burying the dead, however holy; 'for what can be more precious or holy than the Lord's body?' And he persuaded many to bury for the future, with thanksgivings to the Lord for such good instruction."

This was a matter of discipline and of discretion, as to which the custom of the Church may vary at different times; but with that we are not concerned here; to proceed:

"Antony, then, being aware of this, and fearing lest the same should be done to his own body, bidding farewell to the monks in the outer mountain, made hastily for the inner mountain, where he commonly dwelt, and after a few months, fell ill. Then calling to him two who lived with him, as ascetics, for fifteen years past, and ministered to him on account of his age, he said to them, 'I, as it is written, go the way of my fathers; for I perceive I am called by the Lord. You, then, be sober, and forfeit not the reward of your long asceticism; but, as those who have made a beginning, be diligent to hold fast your earnestness. Ye know the assaults of the evil spirit, how fierce they are, yet how powerless. Fear them not; rather breathe the spirit of Christ, and believe in Him always. Live as if dying daily; take heed to yourselves, and remember the admonitions you have heard from me. Have no fellowship with the schismatics, nor at all with the heretical Arians. Be diligent the rather to

join yourselves, first of all, to the Lord, next to the Saints, that after death they may receive you as friends and intimates into the eternal habitations. Such be your thoughts, such your spirit; and if you have any care for me, remember me as a father. Do not let them carry my body into Egypt, lest they store it in their houses. One of my reasons for coming to this mountain was to hinder this. You know I have ever reproved those who have done this, and charged them to cease from the custom. Bury, then, my body in the earth, in obedience to my word, so that no one may know the place, except yourselves. In the resurrection of the dead it will be restored to me incorruptible by the Saviour. Distribute my garments as follows:—let Athanasius, the bishop, have the one sheep-skin and the garment I sleep on, which he gave me new, and which has grown old with me. Let Serapion, the bishop, have the other sheep-skin. As to the hair-shirt, keep it for yourselves. And now, my children, farewell; Antony is going, and is no longer with you.'

"After these words, they kissed him. Then he stretched himself out, and seemed to see friends come to him, and to be very joyful at the sight

(to judge from the cheerfulness of his countenance as he lay), and so he breathed his last, and was gathered to his fathers. His attendants, as he had bidden them, wrapped his body up, and buried it: and no one knows yet where it lies, except these two. As to the two friends who were bequeathed a sheep-skin a-piece of the blessed Antony, and his tattered garment, each of them preserves it as a great possession: For when he looks at it, he thinks he sees Antony; and when he puts it on, he is, as it were, carrying about him his instructions with joy."—§ 90, 92.

Such was in life and death the first founder of the monastic system; and his example, both as seen, and far more in the narrative of his biographer, was like a fire kindled in Christendom, which "many waters could not quench." Not that I would defend the details of any popular form of religion, considering that its popularity implies some condescension to the weaknesses of human nature; yet, if I must choose between the fashionable doctrines of one age and of another, certainly I shall prefer that which requires self-denial, and creates hardihood and contempt of the world, to some of the religions now in

esteem, which rob faith of all its substance, its grace, its nobleness, and its strength, and excuse self-indulgence by the arguments of spiritual pride, self-confidence, and security;—which in short make it their boast that they are more *comfortable* than that ancient creed which, together with joy, leads men to continual smiting on the breast, and prayers for pardon, and looking forward to the judgment-day, as to an event really to happen to themselves individually.

The following is Athanasius's account of the effect produced by Antony in Egypt, even in his lifetime; and perhaps in his lifetime it was not only in its beginning, but in its prime. For all things human tend not to be, and the first fervour of zeal and love is the most wonderful. Yet even when its original glory had faded, the monastic home was ever, as now, the refuge of the penitent and the school of the saint. But let us hear Athanasius:—

"Among the mountains there were monasteries, as if tabernacles filled with divine choirs, singing, studying, fasting, praying, exulting in the hope of things to come, and working for almsdeeds, having love and harmony one towards another. And truly it was given one there to

see a peculiar country of piety and righteousness. Neither injurer nor injured was there, nor chiding of the tax-collector; but a multitude of ascetics, whose one feeling was towards holiness. So that a stranger, seeing the monasteries and their order, would be led to cry out, 'How beauteous are thy homes, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel; as shady groves, as a garden on a river, as tents which the Lord has pitched, and as cedars by the waters.'"—§ 44.

CHAPTER IX.

AUGUSTINE AND THE VANDALS.

"The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and men of mercy are taken away, for there is none to understand; for the just man is taken away from before the face of evil."

I BEGAN by directing the reader's attention to the labours of two great bishops, who restored the faith of Christianity where it had long been obscured. Now, I will put before him, by way of contrast, a scene of the overthrow of religion, —the extinction of a candlestick,—effected, too, by champions of the same heretical creed which Basil and Gregory successfully resisted. It will be found in the history of the last days of the great Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa. The truth triumphed in the East by the power of preaching; it was extirpated in the South by the edge of the sword.

Though it may not be given us to appropriate the prophecies of the Apocalypse to the real events to which they belong, yet it is impossible to read its inspired pages, and then to turn to

the dissolution of the Roman empire, without seeing a remarkable adaptation, on the whole, between the calamities of that period and the sacred prediction. There is a plain announcement in the inspired page, of "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth;" an announcement of "hail and fire mingled with blood," the conflagration of "trees and green grass," the destruction of ships, the darkening of the sun, and the poisoning of the rivers over a third of their course. There is a clear prophecy of revolutions on the face of the earth and in the structure of society. And on the other hand, let us observe how fully such general foretokenings are borne out, among other passages of history, in the Vandalic conquest of Africa.

The coast of Africa, between the great desert and the Mediterranean, was one of the most fruitful and opulent portions of the Roman world. The eastern extremity of it was more especially connected with the empire, containing in it Carthage, Hippo, and other towns, celebrated as being sees of the Christian Church, as well as places of civil importance. In the spring of the year 428, the Vandals, Arians by creed, and barbarians by birth and disposition, crossed the

Straits of Gibraltar, and proceeded along this fertile district, bringing with them devastation and captivity on every side. They abandoned themselves to the most savage cruelties and excesses. They pillaged, ravaged, burned, massacred all that came in their way, sparing not even the fruit trees, which might have afforded some poor food to the remnant of the population, who had escaped from them into caves, the recesses of the mountains, or into vaults. Twice did this desolating pestilence sweep over the face of the country.

The fury of the Vandals was especially exercised towards the memorials of religion. Churches, cemeteries, monasteries, were objects of their fiercest hatred and most violent assaults. They broke into places of worship, cut to pieces all internal decorations, and then set fire to them. They tortured bishops and clergy with the hope of obtaining treasure. The names of some of the victims of their ferocity are preserved. Mansuetus, bishop of Utica, was burnt alive; Papinianus, bishop of Vite, was laid upon red-hot plates of iron. This was near upon the time when the third General Council was assembling at Ephesus, which, from the insecure state of the

roads, and the universal misery which reigned among them, the African bishops were prevented from attending. The Clergy, the religious brotherhoods, the holy virgins, were scattered all over the country. The daily sacrifice was stopped, the sacraments could not be obtained, the festivals of the Church passed unnoticed. At length, only three cities remained unvisited by the general desolation,—Carthage, Hippo, and Cirtha.

Hippo was the see of St. Austin, at that time seventy-four years of age (forty almost of which had been passed in ministerial labours), and warned, by the law of nature, of the approach of dissolution. It was as if the light of prosperity and peace were fading away from the African Church, as sank the bodily powers of its great earthly ornament and stay. At this time, when the terrors of the barbaric invasion spread on all sides, a bishop wrote to him to ask whether it was allowable for the ruler of a Church to leave the scene of his pastoral duties in order to save his life. Different opinions had heretofore been expressed on this question. In Augustine's own country Tertullian had maintained that flight was unlawful, but he was a Montanist when he so wrote. On the other hand, Cyprian had actually

fled, and had defended his conduct when questioned by the clergy of Rome. His contemporaries, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Gregory of Neocæsarea, had fled also; as had Polycarp before them, and Athanasius after them.

Athanasius's reasons for flight, in his published defence of himself, are as follows:—First, he observes, it has the sanction of numerous Scripture precedents. Thus, in the instance of confessors under the old covenant, Jacob fled from Esau, Moses from Pharao, David from Saul; Elias concealed himself from Achab three years, and the sons of the prophets were hid by Abdias in a cave from Jezebel. In like manner under the Gospel, the disciples hid themselves for fear of the Jews, and St. Paul was let down in a basket over the wall at Damascus. On the other hand, no instance can be adduced of over-boldness and headstrong daring in the saints of Scripture. But our Lord Himself is the chief exemplar of fleeing from persecution. As a child in arms He had to flee into Egypt. When He returned, He still shunned Judea, and retired to Nazareth. After raising Lazarus, on the Jews seeking His life, "He walked no more openly among them," but retreated to the neighbourhood of the desert.

When they took up stones to cast at Him, He hid Himself; when they attempted to cast Him down headlong, He made His way through them; when He heard of the Baptist's death, He retired across the lake into a desert place, apart. If it be said that He did so, because His time was not yet come, and that when it was come, He delivered up Himself, we must ask, in reply, how a man can know that his time is come, so as to have a right to do what Christ did? And since we do not know, we must have patience; and, till God by His own act determines the time, we must "wander in sheep-skins and goat-skins," rather than take the matter into our own hands; as even Saul, the persecutor, was left by David in the hands of God, whether He would "strike him, or his day should come to die, or he should go down to battle and perish."

If God's servants, proceeds Athanasius, have at any time presented themselves before their persecutors, it was at God's command: thus Elias showed himself to Achab; so did the prophet from Juda, to Jeroboam; and St. Paul appealed to Cæsar. Flight, so far from implying cowardice, requires often greater courage than not to flee. It is a greater trial of heart. Death

is an end of all trouble; he who flees is ever expecting death, and dies daily. Job's life was not to be touched by Satan, yet was not his fortitude shown in what he suffered? Exile is full of miseries. The after-conduct of the saints showed they had not fled for fear. Jacob, on his death-bed, condemned death, and exultingly blessed the twelve Patriarchs; Moses returned, and presented himself before Pharao; David was a valiant warrior; Elias rebuked Achab and Ochazias; Peter and Paul, who had once hid themselves, offered themselves to martyrdom at Rome. And so acceptable was the previous flight of these men to Almighty God, that we read of His showing them some special favour during it. Jacob had the vision of Angels; Moses saw the burning bush; David wrote his prophetic Psalms; Elias raised the dead, and at length gathered the people on Mount Carmel. How would the Gospel ever have been preached throughout the world, if the Apostles had not fled? And, since their time, those, too, who have become martyrs, at first fled; or, if they advanced to meet their persecutors, it was by some secret suggestion of the Divine Spirit. But, above all, while these instances abundantly

illustrate the rule of duty in persecution, and the temper of mind necessary in those who observe it, we have that duty itself declared in a plain precept by no other than our Lord: "When they shall persecute you in this city," He says, "flee into another;" and "let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains."

Thus argues the great Athanasius, living in spirit with the saints departed, while full of labour and care here on earth. For the arguments on the other side, let us turn to a writer, not less vigorous in mind, but less subdued in temper. Thus writes Tertullian on the same subject, then a Montanist, a century and a half earlier:— Nothing happens, he says, without God's will. Persecution is sent by Him, to put His servants to the test; to divide between good and bad: it is a trial; what man has any right to interfere? He who gives the prize, alone can assign the combat. Persecution is more than permitted, it is actually appointed by Almighty God. It does the Church much good, as leading Christians to increased seriousness while it lasts. It comes and goes at God's ordering. Satan could not touch Job, except so far as God gave permission. He could not touch the Apostles, except as far

as an opening was allowed in the words, "Satan hath desired to have you, but I have prayed for thee," Peter, "and, thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." We pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;" why, if we may deliver ourselves? Satan is permitted access to us, either for punishment, as in Saul's case, or for our chastisement. Since the persecution comes from God, we may not lawfully avoid it, nor can we avoid it. We cannot, because He is all powerful; we must not, because He is all good. We should leave the matter entirely to God. As to the command of fleeing from city to city, this was temporary. It was intended to secure the preaching of the Gospel to the nations. While the Apostles preached to the Jews,—till they had preached to the Gentiles,—they were to flee; but one might as well argue, that we now are not to go "into the way of the Gentiles," but to confine ourselves to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," as that we are now to "flee from city to city." Nor, indeed, was going from city to city a flight; it was a continued preaching; not an accident, but a rule: whether persecuted or not, they were to go about; and before they had gone through the

cities of Israel, the Lord was to come. The command contemplated only those very cities. If St. Paul escaped out of Damascus by night, yet afterwards, against the prayers of the disciples and the prophecy of Agabus, he went up to Jerusalem. Thus the command to flee did not last even through the lifetime of the Apostles; and, indeed, why should God introduce persecution, if He bids us retire from it? This is imputing inconsistency to His acts. If we want texts to justify our not fleeing, He says, "Whoso shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father." "Blessed are they that suffer persecution;" "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved;" "Be not afraid of them that kill the body;" "Whosoever does not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." How are these texts fulfilled when a man flees? Christ, who is our pattern, did not more than pray, "If it be possible, let this chalice pass:" we, too, should both stay and pray as He did. And it is expressly told us, that "We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Again, it is said, "Perfect charity casteth out fear;" he who flees, fears; he who fears, "is not perfected in charity."

The Greek proverb is sometimes urged, "He who flees, will fight another day;" yes, and he may flee another day, also. Again, if bishops, priests, and deacons flee, why must the laity stay? or must they flee also? "The good shepherd," on the contrary, "layeth down his life for his sheep;" whereas, the bad shepherd "seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth." At no time, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah tell us, is the flock in greater danger of being scattered, than when it loses its shepherd. Tertullian ends thus:—"This doctrine, my brother, perhaps appears to you hard; nay, intolerable. But recollect that God has said, 'He that can take, let him take it;' that is, he who receives it not, let him depart. He who fears to suffer, cannot belong to Him who has suffered. He who does not fear to suffer, is perfect in love, that is, of God. Many are called, few are chosen. Not he who would walk the broad way, is sought by God, but he who walks the narrow." Thus the ingenious and vehement Tertullian.

With these remarks for and against flight in persecution, we shall be prepared to listen to Augustine on the subject;—I have said, it was

brought under his notice by a brother bishop, with reference to the impending visitation of the barbarians. His answer happily is preserved to us, and extracts from it shall now be set before the reader.

"TO HIS HOLY BROTHER AND FELLOW-BISHOP HONORATUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS HEALTH IN THE LORD.

"I thought the copy of my letter to our brother Quodvultdeus, which I sent to you, would have been sufficient, dear brother, without the task you put on me of counselling you on the proper course to pursue under our existing dangers. It was certainly a short letter; yet I included every question which it was necessary to ask and answer, when I said that no persons were hindered from retiring to such fortified places as they were able and desirous to secure; while, on the other hand, we might not break the bonds of our ministry, by which the love of Christ has engaged us not to desert the Church, where we are bound to serve. The following is what I laid down in the letter I refer to:—'It remains, then,' I say, 'that, be God's people in the place where we are, ever so few, yet, if it does stay, we, whose ministration is

necessary to its staying, must say to the Lord, Thou art our strong rock and place of defence.'

"But you tell me that this view is not sufficient for you, from an apprehension lest we should be running counter to our Lord's command and example, to flee from city to city. Yet is it conceivable that He meant, that our flocks, whom He bought with His own blood, should be deprived of that necessary ministration without which they cannot live? Is He a precedent for this, who was carried in flight into Egypt by His parents when but a child, before He had formed Churches which we can talk of His leaving? Or, when St. Paul was let down in a basket through a window, lest the enemy should seize him, and so escaped his hands, was the Church of that place bereft of its necessary ministration, seeing there were other brethren stationed there to fulfil what was necessary? Evidently it was their wish that he, who was the direct object of the persecutors' search, should preserve himself for the sake of the Church. Let, then, the servants of Christ, the ministers of His word and sacraments, do in such cases, as He enjoined or permitted. Let such of them, by all means, flee from city to city, as are special objects

of persecution; so that they who are not thus attacked desert not the Church, but give meat to those their fellow-servants, who they know cannot live without it. But in a case when all classes—I mean bishops, clergy, and people—are in some common danger, let not those who need the aid of others, be deserted by those whom they need. Either let one and all remove into some fortified place, or, if any are obliged to remain, let them not be abandoned by those who have to supply their ecclesiastical necessity, so that they may survive in common, or suffer in common, what their Father decrees they should undergo.

"I understand that a certain bishop has argued, that if our Lord has enjoined upon us flight, in persecutions which may ripen into martyrdom, much more is it necessary to flee from barren sufferings in a barbarian and hostile invasion. This is true and reasonable; that is, in the case of such as have no ecclesiastical office to tie them. For he who awaits, when he might escape, the murderous career of a foe, lest he should desert Christ's ministry, without which, men can neither become nor continue Christians, has attained a greater maturity of charity than

he who, first fleeing for his own sake, not his brethren's, and then captured, confesses Christ, and accepts martyrdom.

"Why should men make no question about obeying the precept about fleeing from city to city, and yet have no dread of 'the hireling who seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth, because he careth not for the sheep?' Why do they not try to reconcile (as they assuredly can) these two incontrovertible declarations of our Lord, one of which suffers and commands flight, the other arraigns and condemns it? And what other mode is there of reconciling them, than that which I have above laid down? viz., that we, the ministers of Christ, who are under the pressure of persecution, are *then* at liberty to leave our posts, when no flock is left for us to serve; or again, when, though there be a flock, yet there are others to supply our necessary ministry, who have not the same reason for fleeing,—as in the case of St. Paul; or, again, of the holy Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who was especially sought after by the emperor Constantius, while the Catholic people, who remained together in Alexandria, were in no measure deserted by the other ministers. But when the people remain,

and the ministers flee, and the ministration is suspended, what is that but the guilty flight of hirelings, who care not for the sheep? For then the wolf will come,—not man, but the devil, who is accustomed to persuade such believers to apostasy, who are bereft of the daily ministration of the Lord's Body; and by your, not knowledge, but ignorance of duty, the weak brother will perish, for whom Christ died.

"Let us only consider, when matters come to an extremity of danger, and there is no longer any means of escape, how persons flock together to the Church, of both sexes, and all ages, begging for baptism, or reconciliation, or for even works of penance, and one and all of them for consolation, and the consecration and application of the sacraments. Now, if ministers are wanting, what ruin awaits those, who depart from this life unregenerate or unabsolved! Consider the grief of their believing relatives, who will not have them as partakers with themselves in the rest of eternal life; consider the anguish of the whole multitude, nay, the cursings of some of them, at the absence of ministration and ministers.

"It may be said, however, that the ministers

of God ought to avoid such imminent perils, in order to preserve themselves for the profit of the Church for more tranquil times. I grant it where others are present to supply the ecclesiastical ministry, as in the case of Athanasius. How necessary it was to the Church, how beneficial, that such a man should remain in the flesh, the Catholic faith bears witness, which was maintained against the Arians by his voice and his love. But when there is a common danger, and when there is rather reason to apprehend lest a man should be thought to flee, not from purpose of prudence, but from dread of dying, and when the example of flight does more harm than the service of living does good, it is by no means to be done. To be brief, holy David withdrew himself from the hazard of war, lest perchance he should 'quench the light of Israel,' at the instance of his people, not on his own motion. Otherwise, he would have occasioned many imitators of an inactivity which they had in that case ascribed, not to regard for the welfare of others, but to cowardice.

"There is another question which demands consideration. If there is a plain expedience in some ministers fleeing at the prospect of a sweep-

ing calamity, in order that the remnant of the flock, when the slaughter is over, may still have those who can minister to them, what is to be done in a case where all ministers are likely to perish, unless some of them take to flight? What is to be done, for instance, if the destruction rages only with the view of reaching the ministers of the Church? O, that there may be then a quarrel between God's ministers, *who* are to remain, and *who* to flee, lest the Church should be deserted, whether by all fleeing or all dying! Surely there will ever be such a quarrel, where each party burns in its own charity, yet indulges the charity of the other. In such a difficulty, the lot seems the fairest decision, in default of others. God judges better than man in perplexities of this sort; whether it be His will to reward the holier among them with the crown of martyrdom, and to spare the weak, or again, to strengthen the latter to endure evil, removing those from life whom the Church of God can spare the better. Should it, however, seem inexpedient to cast lots,—a measure for which I cannot bring precedent,—at least, let no one's flight be the cause of the Church's losing those ministrations which, in such dangers, are so necessary and so imperative. Let no one make

himself an exception, on the plea of having some particular grace, which gives him a claim to life, and therefore to flight.

"It is sometimes supposed, that bishops and clergy, remaining at their posts in dangers of this kind, mislead their flocks into staying, by their example. But it is easy for us to remove this objection or imputation, by frankly telling them not to be misled by our remaining. 'We are remaining for your sake,' we must say, 'lest you should fail to obtain such ministration, as we know to be necessary to your salvation in Christ. Make your escape, and you will then set us free.' The occasion for saying this is when there seems some real advantage in retiring to a safer position. Should all or some make answer, 'We are in His hands from whose anger no one can flee anywhere; whose mercy every one may find everywhere, though he stir not, whether some necessary tie detains him, or the uncertainty of safe escape deters him;' most undoubtedly such persons are not to be left destitute of Christian ministrations.

"'I have written these lines, dearest brother, in truth, as I think, and in clear charity, by way of reply, since you have consulted me; but not

as dictating, if, perchance, you may find some better view to guide you. However, better we cannot do in these perils than pray the Lord our God to have mercy upon us."—*Ep.* 228.

The luminous judgment, the calm faith, and the single-minded devotion which this letter exhibits, were fully maintained in the conduct of the far-famed writer, in the events which followed. It was written on the first entrance of the Vandals into Africa, about two years before they laid siege to Hippo; and during this interval of dreadful suspense and excitement, as well as of actual suffering, amid the desolation of the Church around him, with the prospect of his own personal trials, we find this unwearied teacher carrying on his works of love by pen, and word of mouth,—eagerly, as knowing his time was short, but tranquilly, as if it were a season of prosperity. He commenced a fresh work against the opinions of Julian, a friend of his, who, beginning to run well, had unhappily taken up a bold profession of Pelagianism; he wrote a treatise on Predestination, at the suggestion of his friends, to meet the objections urged against former works of his on the same subject; sustained a controversy with the Arians; and began

a history of heresies. What makes Augustine's diligence in the duties of his episcopate, at this season, the more remarkable, is, that he was actually engaged at the same time in political affairs, as a confidential friend and counsellor of Boniface, the governor of Africa (who had first invited and then opposed the entrance of the Vandals), and accordingly was in circumstances especially likely to unsettle and agitate the mind of an aged man.

At length events hastened on to a close. Fugitive multitudes betook themselves to Hippo. Boniface threw himself into it. The Vandals appeared before it, and laid siege to it. Meanwhile, Augustine fell ill. He had about him many of the African bishops, and among other friends, Possidius, whose account of his last hours is preserved to us. "We used continually to converse together," says Possidius, "about the misfortunes in which we were involved, and contemplated God's tremendous judgments which were before our eyes, saying, 'Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right.' One day, at meal time, as we talked together, he said, 'Know ye that in this our present calamity, I pray God to vouchsafe to rescue this besieged city, or (if

otherwise) to give His servants strength to bear His will, or, at least, to take me to Himself out of this world.' We followed his advice, and both ourselves, and our friends, and the whole city offered up the same prayer with him. On the third month of the siege, he was seized with a fever, and took to his bed, and was reduced to the extreme of sickness."

Thus, the latter part of his prayer was put in train for accomplishment, as the former part was subsequently granted by the retreat of the enemy from Hippo. But to continue the narrative of Possidius:—"He had been used to say, in his familiar conversation, that after receiving baptism, even approved Christians and priests ought not to depart from the body without a fitting and sufficient course of penance. Accordingly, in the last illness, of which he died, he set himself to write out the special penitential psalms of David, and to place them four by four against the wall, so that, as he lay in bed, in the days of his sickness, he could see them. And so he used to read and weep abundantly. And lest his attention should be distracted by any one, about ten days before his death, he begged us who were with him

to hinder persons entering his room except at the times when his medical attendants came to see him, or his meals were brought to him. This was strictly attended to, and all that time given to prayer. Till this last illness, he had been able to preach the word of God in the church without intermission with energy and boldness, with healthy mind and judgment. He slept with his fathers in a good old age, sound in limb, unimpaired in sight and hearing, and, as it is written, while we stood by, beheld, and prayed with him. We took part in the sacrifice to God at his funeral, and so buried him."

Though the Vandals failed in their first attack upon Hippo, during Augustine's last illness, they renewed it shortly after his death, under more favourable circumstances. Boniface was defeated in the field, and retired to Italy; and the inhabitants of Hippo left their city. The Vandals entered and burned it, excepting the library of Augustine, which was providentially preserved.

The desolation which, at that era, swept over the face of Africa, was completed by the subsequent invasion of the Saracens. Its five

hundred churches are no more. The voyager gazes on the sullen rocks which line its coast, and discovers no token of Christianity to cheer the gloom. Hippo* has ceased to be an episcopal city; but its great Teacher, though dead, yet speaks; his voice is gone out into all lands, and his words unto the ends of the world. He needs no dwelling-place, whose home is the Catholic Church; he fears no barbarian or heretical desolation, whose creed is destined to last unto the end.

* Since this was written, the French have reinstated the see.

CHAPTER X.

CONVERSION OF AUGUSTINE.

"Thou hast chastised me and I was instructed, as a steer unaccustomed to the yoke. Convert me, and I shall be converted, for Thou art the Lord my God. For after Thou didst convert me, I did penance, and after Thou didst show unto me, I struck my thigh. I am confounded and ashamed, because I have borne the reproach of my youth."

A CHANCE reader may ask, What was the history of that celebrated Father, whose last days were the subject of my last chapter? What had his life been, what his early years, what his labours? Surely he was no ordinary man, whose end, in all its circumstances, is so impressive. We may answer in a few words, that Augustine was the son of a pious mother, who had the pain of witnessing, for many years, his wanderings in doubt and unbelief, who prayed incessantly for his conversion, and at length was blessed with the sight of it. From

early youth he had given himself up to a course of life quite inconsistent with the profession of a catechumen, into which he had been admitted in infancy. How far he had fallen into any great excesses is doubtful. He uses language of himself which may have the worst of meanings, but may, on the other hand, be but the expression of deep repentance and spiritual sensitiveness. In his twentieth year he embraced the Manichæan heresy, in which he continued nine years. Towards the end of that time, leaving Africa, his native country, first for Rome, then for Milan, he fell in with St. Ambrose; and his conversion and baptism followed in the course of his thirty-fourth year. This memorable event, his conversion, has been celebrated in the Western Church from early times, being the only event of the kind thus distinguished, excepting the conversion of St. Paul.

His life had been for many years one of great anxiety and discomfort, the life of one dissatisfied with himself, and despairing of finding the truth. Men of ordinary minds are not so circumstanced as to feel the misery of irreligion. That misery consists in the perverted

and discordant action of the various faculties and functions of the soul, which have lost their legitimate governing power, and are unable to regain it, except at the hands of their Maker. Now the run of irreligious men do not suffer in any great degree from this disorder, and are not miserable; they have neither great talents nor strong passions; they have not within them the materials of rebellion in such measure as to threaten their peace. They follow their own wishes, they yield to the bent of the moment, they act on inclination, not on principle, but their motive powers are neither strong nor various enough to be troublesome. Their minds are in no sense under rule; but anarchy is not in their case a state of confusion, but of deadness; not unlike the internal condition as it is reported of eastern cities and provinces at present, in which, though the government is weak or null, the body politic goes on without any great embarrassment or collision of its members one with another, by the force of inveterate habit. It is very different when the moral and intellectual principles are vigorous, active, and developed. Then, if the governing power be feeble, all the sub-

ordinates are in the position of rebels in arms; and what the state of a mind is under such circumstances, the analogy of a civil community will suggest to us. Then we have before us the melancholy spectacle of high aspirations without an aim, a hunger of the soul unsatisfied, and a never-ending restlessness and inward warfare of its various faculties. Gifted minds, if not submitted to the rightful authority of religion, become the most unhappy and the most mischievous. They need both an object to feed upon, and the power of self-mastery; and the love of their Maker, and nothing but it, supplies both the one and the other. We have seen in our own day, in the case of a popular poet, an impressive instance of a great genius throwing off the fear of God, seeking for happiness in the creature, roaming unsatisfied from one object to another, breaking his soul upon itself, and bitterly confessing and imparting his wretchedness to all around him. I have no wish at all to compare him to St. Augustine; indeed, if we may say it without presumption, the very different termination of their trial seems to indicate some great difference in their respective modes of encountering

it. The one dies of premature decay, to all appearance, a hardened infidel; and if he is still to have a name, will live in the mouths of men by writings at once blasphemous and immoral: the other is a Saint and Doctor of the Church. Each makes confessions, the one to the saints, the other to the powers of evil. And does not the difference of the two discover itself in some measure, even to our eyes, in the very history of their wanderings and pinings? At least, there is no appearance in St. Augustine's case of that dreadful haughtiness, sullenness, love of singularity, vanity, irritability, and misanthropy, which were too certainly the characteristics of our own countryman. Augustine was, as his early history shows, a man of affectionate and tender feelings, and open and amiable temper; and, above all, he sought for some excellence external to his own mind, instead of concentrating all his contemplations on himself.

But let us consider what his misery was;—it was that of a mind imprisoned, solitary, and wild with spiritual thirst; and forced to betake itself to the strongest excitements, by way of relieving itself of the rush and violence of feelings,

of which the knowledge of the Divine Perfections was the true and sole sustenance. He ran into excess, not from love of it, but from this fierce fever of mind. "I sought what I might love,"* he says in his Confessions, "in love with loving, and safety I hated, and a way without snares. For within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself, my God; yet throughout that famine I was not hungered, but was without any longing for incorruptible sustenance, not because filled therewith, but the more empty, the more I loathed it. For this cause my soul was sickly and full of sores; it miserably cast itself forth, desiring to be scraped by the touch of objects of sense."—iii. 1. "O foolish man that I then was," he says elsewhere, "enduring impatiently the lot of man! So I fretted, sighed, wept, was distracted; had neither rest nor counsel. For I bore about a shattered and bleeding soul, impatient of being borne by me, yet where to repose it I found not; not in calm groves, nor in games and music, nor in fragrant spots, nor in curious banquetings, nor in indulgence of the bed and the couch, nor, finally, in books or

* Most of these translations are from the Oxford edition of 1838.

poetry found it repose. All things looked ghastly, yea, the very light. In groaning and tears alone found I a little refreshment. But when my soul was withdrawn from them, a huge load of misery weighed me down. To Thee, O Lord, it ought to have been raised, for Thee to lighten; I knew it, but neither could nor would; the more, since when I thought of Thee, Thou wast not to me any solid or substantial thing. For Thou wert not Thyself, but a mere phantom, and my error was my God. If I offered to discharge my load thereon, that it might rest, it glided through the void, and came rushing down against me; and I had remained to myself a hapless spot, where I could neither be, nor be from thence. For whither should my heart flee from my heart? whither should I flee from myself? whither not follow myself? And yet I fled out of my country; for so should mine eyes look less for *him*, when they were not wont to see him."—iv. 12.

He is speaking in this last sentence of a friend he had lost, whose death-bed was very remarkable, and whose dear familiar name he apparently has not courage to mention. "He had grown up of a child with me," he says, "and we had been both schoolfellows and playfellows."

Augustine had misled him into the heresy which he had adopted himself, and when he grew to have more and more sympathy in Augustine's pursuits, the latter united himself to him in a closer intimacy. Scarcely had he thus given him his heart, when God took him. "Thou tookest him," he says, "out of this life, when he had scarce completed one whole year of my friendship, sweet to me above all sweetness in that life of mine. A long while, sore sick of a fever, he lay senseless in the dews of death, and being given over, he was baptized unwitting; I, meanwhile, little regarding, or presuming that his soul would retain rather what it had received of me, than what was wrought on his unconscious body." The Manichees, it should be observed, rejected baptism. He proceeds: "But it proved far otherwise; for he was refreshed and restored. Forthwith, as soon as I could speak with him (and I could as soon as he was able, for I never left him, and we hung but too much upon each other), I essayed to jest with him, as though he would jest with me at that baptism, which he had received, when utterly absent in mind and feeling, but had now understood that he had received. But he shrunk from me, as from an enemy; and

with a wonderful and sudden freedom bade me, if I would continue his friend, forbear such language to him. I, all astonished and amazed, suppressed all my emotions till he should grow well, and his health were strong enough for me to deal with him as I would. But he was taken away from my madness, that with Thee he might be preserved for my comfort: a few days after, in my absence, he was attacked again by fever, and so departed."—iv. 8.

From distress of mind Augustine left his native place Thagaste, and came to Carthage, where he became a teacher in rhetoric. Here he fell in with Faustus, an eminent Manichean bishop and disputant, in whom, however, he was disappointed; and the disappointment abated his attachment to his sect, and disposed him to look for truth elsewhere. Disgusted with the licence which prevailed among the students at Carthage, he determined to proceed to Rome, and disregarding and eluding the entreaties of his mother Monica, who dreaded his removal from his own country, he went thither. At Rome he resumed his profession; but inconveniences as great, though of another kind, encountered him in that city; and upon the people of Milan sending for a rhetoric

reader, he made application for the appointment, and obtained it. To Milan then he came, the city of St. Ambrose, in the year of our Lord 385.

Ambrose, though weak in voice, had the reputation of eloquence; and Augustine, who seems to have gone with introductions to him, and was won by his kindness of manner, attended his sermons with curiosity and interest. "I listened," he says, "not in the frame of mind which became me, but in order to see whether his eloquence answered what was reported of it: I hung on his words attentively, but of the matter I was but an unconcerned and contemptuous spectator."—v. 23. His impression of his style of preaching is worth noticing: "I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more full of knowledge, yet in manner less pleasurable and soothing, than that of Faustus." Augustine was insensibly moved: he determined on leaving the Manichees, and returning to the state of a catechumen in the Catholic Church, into which he had been admitted by his parents. He began to eye and muse upon the great bishop of Milan more and more, and tried in vain to penetrate his secret heart, and to ascertain the thoughts and feelings which swayed him. He felt he did

not understand him. If the respect and intimacy of the great could make a man happy, these advantages he perceived Ambrose to possess; yet he was not satisfied that he was a happy man. His celibacy seemed a drawback: what constituted his hidden life? or was he cold at heart? or was he of a famished and restless spirit? He felt his own malady, and longed to ask him some questions about it. But Ambrose could not easily be spoken with. Though accessible to all, yet that very circumstance made it difficult for an individual, especially one who was not of his flock, to get a private interview with him. When he was not taken up with the Christian people who surrounded him, he was either at his meals or engaged in private reading. Augustine used to enter, as all persons might, without being announced; but after staying awhile, afraid of interrupting him, he departed again. However, he heard his expositions of Scripture every Sunday, and gradually made progress.

He was now in his thirtieth year, and since he was a youth of eighteen had been searching after truth; yet he was still "in the same mire, greedy of things present," but finding nothing stable. "To-morrow," he said to himself, "I shall find

it; it will appear manifestly, and I shall grasp it: lo, Faustus the Manichee will come and clear every thing! O you great men, ye academics, is it true then, that no certainty can be attained for the ordering of life? Nay, let us search diligently, and despair not. Lo, things in the ecclesiastical books are not absurd to us now, which sometimes seemed absurd, and may be otherwise taken and in a good sense. I will take my stand where, as a child, my parents placed me, until the clear truth be found out. But where shall it be sought, or when? Ambrose has no leisure; we have no leisure to read; where shall we find even the books? where, or when, procure them? Let set times be appointed, and certain hours be ordered for the health of our soul. Great hope has dawned; the Catholic faith teaches not what we thought; and do we doubt to knock, that the rest may be opened? The forenoons, indeed, our scholars take up; what do we during the rest of our time? why not this? But if so, when pay we court to our great friend, whose favours we need? when compose what we may sell to scholars? when refresh ourselves, unbending our minds from this intenseness of care?

"Perish every thing: dismiss we these empty vanities; and betake ourselves to the one search for truth! Life is a poor thing, death is certain; if it surprises us, in what state shall we depart hence? and when shall we learn what here we have neglected? and shall we not rather suffer the punishment of this negligence? What if death itself cut off and end all care and feeling? Then must this be ascertained. But God forbid this! It is no vain and empty thing, that the excellent dignity of the Christian faith has overspread the whole world. Never would such and so great things be wrought for us by God, if with the body the soul also came to an end. Wherefore delay then to abandon worldly hopes, and give ourselves wholly to seek after God and the blessed life? But wait: even those things are pleasant; they have some and no small sweetness. We must not lightly abandon them, for it were a shame to return again to them. See, it is no great matter now to obtain some station, and then what should we wish for more? We have store of powerful friends; if nothing else offers, and we be in much haste, at least a presidency may be given us; and a wife with some fortune, that she increase not our charges; and this shall

be the bound of desire. Many great men, and most worthy of imitation, have given themselves to the study of wisdom in the state of marriage." —vi. 18, 19.

In spite of this reluctance to give up a secular life, yet in proportion as the light of Christian truth opened on Augustine's mind, so was he drawn on to that higher Christian state on which our Lord and His Apostle have bestowed special praise. So it was, and not unnaturally in those times, that high and earnest minds, when they had found the truth, were not content to embrace it by halves; they would take all or none, they would go all lengths, they would covet the better gifts, or else they would remain as they were. It seemed to them absurd to take so much trouble to find the truth, and to submit to such a revolution in their opinions and motives as its reception involved; and yet, after all, to content themselves with a second-best profession, unless there was some plain duty obliging them to live the secular life they had hitherto led. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, the pomp of life, the pride of station, and the indulgence of sense, would be tolerated by the Christian, then only, when it would be a sin to re-

nounce them. The pursuit of gain may be an act of submission to the will of parents; a married life is the performance of a solemn and voluntary vow; but it may often happen, and did happen in Augustine's day especially, that there are no religious reasons against a man's giving up the world, as our Lord and His Apostles renounced it. When his parents were heathen, or were Christians of his own high temper, when he had no fixed engagement or position in life, when the State itself was either infidel or but partially emerging out of its old pollutions, and when grace was given to desire and strive after, if not fully to reach, the sanctity of the Lamb's virginal company, duty would often lie, not in shunning, but in embracing an ascetic life. Besides, the Church in the fourth century had had no experience yet of temporal prosperity; she knew religion only amid the storms of persecution, or the uncertain lull between them, in the desert or the catacomb, in insult, contempt, and calumny. She had not yet seen how opulence, and luxury, and splendour, and pomp, and polite refinement, and fashion, were compatible with the Christian name; and her more serious children imagined, with a simplicity or

narrowness of mind which will in this day provoke a smile, that they ought to imitate Cyprian and Dionysius in their mode of living and their habits, as well as in their feelings, professions, and spiritual knowledge. They thought that religion consisted in deeds, not words. Riches, power, rank, and literary eminence, were then thought misfortunes, when viewed apart from the service they might render to the cause of truth; the atmosphere of the world was thought unhealthy:—Augustine then, in proportion as he approached the Church, ascended towards heaven.

Time went on; he was in his thirty-second year; he still was gaining light; he renounced his belief in fatalism; he addressed himself to St. Paul's Epistles. He began to give up the desire of distinction in his profession: this was a great step; however, still his spirit mounted higher than his heart as yet could follow. "I was displeased," he says, "that I led a secular life; yea, now that my desires no longer inflamed me, as of old, with hopes of honour and profit, a very grievous burden it was to undergo so heavy a bondage. For in comparison of Thy sweetness, and 'the beauty of Thy honour, which I loved,'

these things delighted me no longer. But I still was enthralled with the love of woman: nor did the Apostle forbid me to marry, although he advised me to something better, chiefly wishing that all men were as he himself. But I, being weak, chose the more indulgent place; and, because of this alone, was tossed up and down in all beside, faint and wasted with withering cares, because in other matters I was constrained, against my will, to conform myself to a married life, to which I was given up and enthralled. I had now found the goodly pearl, which, selling all that I had, I ought to have bought; and I hesitated."—viii. 2.

Finding Ambrose thus reserved, though kind and accessible, he went to an aged man named Simplician, who seems to have baptized St. Ambrose, and eventually succeeded him in his see. He opened his mind to him, and happening in the course of his communications to mention Victorinus's translation of some Platonic works, Simplician asked him if he knew that person's history. It seems he was a professor of rhetoric at Rome, was well versed in literature and philosophy, had been tutor to many of the senators, and had received the high honour of a statue in

the Forum. Up to his old age he had professed, and defended with his eloquence, the old pagan worship. He was led to read the Holy Scriptures, and was brought, in consequence, to a belief in their divinity. For a while he did not feel the necessity of changing his profession; he looked upon Christianity as a philosophy, he embraced it as such, but did not propose to join what he considered the Christian sect, or, as Christians would call it, the Catholic Church. He let Simplician into his secret; but whenever the latter pressed him to take the step, he was accustomed to ask, "whether walls made a Christian." However, such a state could not continue with a man of earnest mind: the leaven worked; at length he unexpectedly called upon Simplician to lead him to church. He was admitted a catechumen, and in due time baptized, "Rome wondering, the Church rejoicing." It was customary at Rome for the candidates for baptism to profess their faith from a raised place in the church, in a set form of words. An offer was made to Victorinus, which was not unusual in the case of bashful and timid persons, to make his profession in private. But he preferred to make it in the ordinary way. "I was public enough,"

he made answer, "in my profession of rhetoric, and ought not to be frightened when professing salvation." He continued the school which he had before he became a Christian, till the edict of Julian forced him to close it. This story went to Augustine's heart, but it did not melt it. There was still the struggle of two wills, the high aspiration and the habitual inertness.

"I was weighed down with the encumbrance of this world, pleasantly, as one is used to be with sleep; and my meditations upon Thee were like the efforts of men who would awake, yet are steeped again under the depth of their slumber. And as no one would wish always to be asleep, and, in the sane judgment of all, waking is better, yet a man commonly delays to shake off sleep, when a heavy torpor is on his limbs, and though it is time to rise, he enjoys it the more heartily while he ceases to approve it: so, in spite of my conviction that Thy love was to be obeyed rather than my own lusts, yet I yielded to the approval, but was taken prisoner by the enjoyment. When Thou saidst to me, 'Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee,' and showedst the plain reasonableness of Thy word,

convinced by its truth, I could but give the slow and sleepy answer, 'Presently;' 'yes, presently;' 'wait awhile;' though that presently was never present, and that while became long. It was in vain that I delighted in Thy law in the inner man, while another law in my members fought against the law of my mind, and led me captive to the law of sin, which was in my members."—viii. 12.

One day, when he and his friend Alypius were together at home, a countryman, named Pontitian, who held an office in the imperial court, called on him on some matter of business. As they sat talking, he observed a book upon the table, and on opening it found it was St. Paul's Epistles. A strict Christian himself, he was agreeably surprised to find an Apostle, where he expected to meet with some work bearing upon Augustine's profession. The discourse fell upon St. Antony, the celebrated Egyptian solitary, and while it added to Pontitian's surprise to find that they did not even know his name, they, on the other hand, were still more struck with wonder at the relation of his life, and the recent date of it. Thence the conversation passed to the subject of monasteries, the

purity and sweetness of their discipline, and the treasures of grace which through them had been manifested in the desert. It turned out that Augustine and his friend did not even know of the monastery, of which Ambrose had been the patron, outside the walls of Milan. Pontitian went on to give an account of the conversion of two among his fellow-officers under the following circumstances. When he was at Treves, one afternoon, while the emperor was in the circus, he happened to stroll out, with three companions, into the gardens close upon the city wall. After a time they split into two parties, and while he and another went their own way, the other two came upon a cottage, which they were induced to enter. It was the abode of certain recluses, "poor in spirit," as Augustine says, "of whom is the kingdom of heaven;" and here they found the life of St. Antony, which Athanasius had written about twenty years before (A.D. 364—366). One of them began to peruse it; and, moved by the narrative, they both of them resolved on adopting the monastic life.

The effect produced by this relation on Augustine was not less than was caused by the his-

tory of Antony itself upon the imperial officers, and almost as immediately productive of a religious issue. He felt that they did but represent to him, in their obedience, what was wanting in his own, and suggest a remedy for his disordered and troubled state of mind. He says—

"The more ardently I loved these men, whose healthful state of soul was shown in surrendering themselves to Thee for healing, so much the more execrable and hateful did I seem to myself in comparison of them. For now many years had passed with me, as many perhaps as twelve, since my nineteenth, when, upon reading Cicero's 'Hortensius,' I was first incited to seek for wisdom; and still I was putting off renunciation of earthly happiness, and simple search after a treasure which, even in the search, not to speak of the discovery, was better than the actual possession of heathen wealth and power, and than the pleasures of sense poured around me at my will. But I, wretched, wretched youth, in that springtime of my life, had asked indeed of Thee the gift of chastity, but had said, 'Give me chastity and continence, but not at once.' I feared, alas, lest Thou shouldst hear me too soon, and cure a thirst at once, which I would fain have

had satisfied, not extinguished. . . But now . disturbed in countenance as well as mind, I turn upon Alypius, 'What ails us?' say I, 'what is this? what is this story? See; the unlearned rise and take heaven by violence, while we, with all our learning, all our want of heart, see where we wallow in flesh and blood! Shall I feel shame to follow their lead, and not rather to let alone what alone is left to me?' Something of this kind I said to him, and while he eyed me in silent wonder; I rushed from him in the ferment of my feelings."—viii. 17—19.

He betook himself to the garden of the house where he lodged, Alypius following him, and sat for awhile in bitter meditation on the impotence and slavery of the human will. The thought of giving up his old habits of life once for all, pressed upon him with overpowering force, and, on the other hand, the beauty of religious obedience pierced and troubled him. He says—

"The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, kept hold of me; they plucked my garment of flesh, and whispered softly, 'Are you indeed giving us up? What! from this moment are we to be strangers to you *for ever?* This and that, shall it be allowed you

from this moment *never again?*' Yet, what a view began to open on the other side, whither I had set my face and was in a flutter to go; the chaste majesty of Continency, serene, cheerful, yet without excess, winning me in a holy way to come without doubting, and ready to embrace me with religious hands full stored with honourable patterns! So many boys and young maidens, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and aged virgins, and Continence herself in all, not barren, but a fruitful mother of children, of joys by Thee, O Lord, her Husband. She seemed to mock me into emulation, saying, 'Canst not thou what these have done, youths and maidens? Can they in their own strength or in the strength of their Lord God? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why rely on thyself and fall? Cast thyself upon His arm. Be not afraid. He will not let you slip. Cast thyself in confidence, He will receive thee and heal thee.' Meanwhile Alypius kept close to my side, silently waiting for the end of my unwonted agitation."

He then proceeds to give an account of the termination of this struggle:—

"At length burst forth a mighty storm,

bringing a mighty flood of tears; and to indulge it to the full, even unto cries, in solitude, I rose up from Alypius, . . . who perceived from my choked voice how it was with me. He remained where we had been sitting, in deep astonishment. I threw myself down under a fig-tree, I know not how, and allowing my tears full vent, offered up to Thee the acceptable sacrifice of my streaming eyes. And I cried out to this effect:—'And Thou, O Lord, how long, how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry? For ever? Remember not our old sins!' for I felt that they were my tyrants. I cried out, piteously, 'How long? how long? to-morrow and to-morrow? why not *now*? why not in this very hour put an end to this my vileness?' While I thus spoke, with tears, in the bitter contrition of my heart, suddenly I heard a voice, as if from a house near me, of a boy or girl chanting forth again and again, 'TAKE UP AND READ, TAKE UP AND READ!' Changing countenance at these words, I began intently to think whether boys used them in any game, but could not recollect that I had ever heard them. I left weeping and rose up, considering it a divine intimation to open the Scriptures and read what first presented

itself. I had heard that Antony had come in during the reading of the Gospel, and had taken to himself the admonition, 'Go, sell all that thou hast,' &c., and had turned to Thee at once, in consequence of that oracle. I had left St. Paul's volume where Alypius was sitting, when I rose thence. I returned thither, seized it, opened, and read in silence the following passage, which first met my eyes, '*Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.*' I had neither desire nor need to read farther. As I finished the sentence, as though the light of peace had been poured into my heart, all the shadows of doubt dispersed. Thus hast Thou converted me to Thee, so as no longer to seek either for wife or other hope of this world, standing fast in that rule of faith in which Thou so many years before revealedst me to my mother."—viii. 26—30.

The last words of this extract relate to a dream which his mother had had some years before, concerning his conversion. On his first turning Manichee, abhorring his opinions, she would not for a while even eat with him, when

she had this dream, in which she had an intimation that where she stood, there Augustine should one day be with her. At another time she derived great comfort from the casual words of a bishop, who, when importuned by her to converse with her son, said at length with some impatience, "Go thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish!" It would be out of place, and is perhaps unnecessary, to enter here into the affecting and well-known history of her tender anxieties and persevering prayers for Augustine. Suffice it to say, she saw the accomplishment of them; she lived till Augustine became a Catholic; and she died in her way back to Africa with him. Her last words were, "Lay this body anywhere; let not the care of it in any way distress you; this only I ask, that wherever you be, you remember me at the Altar of the Lord." "May she," says her son, in dutiful remembrance of her words, "rest in peace with her husband, before and after whom she never had any; whom she obeyed, with patience bringing forth fruit unto Thee, that she might win him also unto Thee. And inspire, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants, my brethren,—Thy

sons, my masters,—whom, in heart, voice, and writing I serve, that so many as read these confessions, may at Thy altar remember Monica, Thy handmaid, with Patricius, her sometime husband, from whom Thou broughtest me into this life; how, I know not. May they with pious affection remember those who were my parents in this transitory light,—my brethren under Thee, our Father, in our Catholic Mother, —my fellow-citizens in the eternal Jerusalem, after which Thy pilgrim people sigh from their going forth unto their return: that so, her last request of me may in the prayers of many receive a fulfilment, through my confessions, more abundant than through my prayers."—ix. 37.

But to return to St. Augustine himself. His conversion took place in the summer of 386 (as seems most probable), and about three weeks after it, taking advantage of the vintage holidays, he gave up his school, assigning as a reason a pulmonary attack which had given him already much uneasiness. He retired to a friend's villa in the country for the rest of the year, with a view of preparing himself for baptism at the Easter following. His religious notions were still very imperfect and vague. He had no

settled notion concerning the nature of the soul, and was ignorant of the mission of the Holy Ghost. And still more, as might be expected, he needed correction and reformation in his conduct. During this time he broke himself of a habit of profane swearing, and, in various ways, disciplined himself for the sacred rite for which he was a candidate. It need scarcely be said that he was constant in devotional and penitential exercises.

In due time the sacrament of baptism was administered to him by St. Ambrose, who had been the principal instrument of his conversion; and he resolved on ridding himself of his worldly possessions except what might be necessary for his bare subsistence, and retiring to Africa, with the purpose of following the rule of life which it had cost him so severe a struggle to adopt. Thagaste, his native place, was his first abode, and he stationed himself in the suburbs, so as to be at once in retirement and in the way for usefulness, if any opening should offer in the city. His conversion had been followed by that of some of his friends, who, together with certain of his fellow-citizens, whom he succeeded in persuading, joined him, and who naturally looked

up to him as the head of their religious community. Their property was cast into a common stock, whence distribution was made according to the need of each. Fasting and prayer, almsgiving and Scripture-reading, were their stated occupations; and Augustine took upon himself the task of instructing them and variously aiding them. The consequence naturally was, that while he busied himself in assisting others in devotional habits, his own leisure was taken from him. His fame spread, and serious engagements were pressed upon him of a nature little congenial with the life to which he had hoped to dedicate himself. Indeed, his talents were of too active and influential a character to allow of his secluding himself from the world, however he might wish it.

Thus he passed the first three years of his return to Africa, at the end of which time, A.D. 389, he was admitted into holy orders. The circumstances under which this change of state took place are curious, and, as in the instance of other Fathers, characteristic of the early times. His reputation having become considerable, he was afraid to approach any place where a bishop was wanted, lest he should be forcibly conse-

crated to the see. He seems to have set his heart on remaining for a time a layman, from a feeling of the responsibility of the ministerial commission. He considered he had not yet mastered the nature and the duties of it. But it so happened, that at the time in question, an imperial agent or commissioner, living at Hippo, a Christian and a serious man, signified his desire to have some conversation with him, as to a design he had of quitting secular pursuits and devoting himself to a religious life. This brought Augustine to Hippo, whither he went with the less anxiety, because that city had at that time a bishop in the person of Valerius. However, it so happened that a presbyter was wanted there, though a bishop was not; and Augustine, little suspicious of what was to happen, joined the congregation in which the election was to take place. When Valerius addressed the people and demanded whom they desired for their pastor, they at once named the stranger, whose reputation had already spread among them. Augustine burst into tears, and some of the people, mistaking the cause of his agitation, observed to him, that though the presbyterate was lower than his desert, yet, notwithstanding,

it stood next to the episcopate. His ordination followed, as to which Valerius himself, being a Greek, and unable to speak Latin fluently, was chiefly influenced by a wish to secure an able preacher in his own place. It may be remarked, as a singular custom in the African Church hitherto, that presbyters either never preached, or never in the presence of a bishop. Valerius was the first to break through the rule in favour of Augustine.

On his coming to Hippo, Valerius gave him a garden belonging to the Church to build a monastery upon; and shortly afterwards we find him thanking Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, for bestowing an estate either on the brotherhood of Hippo or of Thagaste. Soon after we hear of monasteries at Carthage, and other places, besides two additional ones at Hippo. Others branched off from his own community, which he took care to make also a school or seminary of the Church. It became an object with the African Churches to obtain clergy from him. Possidius, his pupil and friend, mentions as many as ten bishops out of his own acquaintance, who had been supplied from the school of Augustine.

Little more need be said to conclude this

sketch of an eventful history. Many years had not passed, before Valerius, feeling the infirmities of age, appointed Augustine as his coadjutor in the see of Hippo, and in this way secured his succeeding him on his death; an object which he had much at heart, but which he feared might be frustrated by Augustine's being called to the government of some other church. This elevation necessarily produced some change in the accidents of his life, but his personal habits remained the same. He left his monastery, as being too secluded for an office which especially obliges its holder to the duties of hospitality; and he formed a religious and clerical community in the episcopal house. This community consisted chiefly of presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons, who gave up all personal property, and were supported upon a common fund. He himself strictly conformed to the rule he imposed on others. Far from appropriating to any private purpose any portion of his ecclesiastical income, he placed the whole charge of it in the hands of his clergy, who took by turns the yearly management of it, he being auditor of their accounts. He never indulged himself in house or land, considering the property of the see as little his

own as his private possessions, which he had formerly given up. He employed it, in one way or other, directly or indirectly, as if it were the property of the poor, ignorant, and sinful. He had "counted the cost," and he acted like a man whose slowness to begin a course was a pledge of zeal when he had once begun it.

CHAPTER XI.

DEMETRIAS.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

AUGUSTINE was the founder of the monastic system in Africa; a system which, with all its possible perversions, and its historical fortunes, has a distinct doctrinal place in the evangelical dispensation. Even viewed as a mere human addition to the institutions of that dispensation, Monachism has as fair a claim on us for a respectful treatment as the traditionary usages of the Rechabites had upon the Jews, which are implicitly sanctioned in the reward divinely accorded to the filial piety which occasioned them. If a Protestant says, that it may be abused, this is only what I might object with at least equal force against many of his own doctrines, such as justification by faith only, which he considers true and important nevertheless. But even if it could be convicted of superstition, fanaticism,

priestcraft, and the other charges which he brings against it, still any how he surely must acknowledge it to be, not a simple self-originated error, but merely a corruption of what *is* in itself *good*—the result of a *misunderstanding* of primitive faith and strictness; nothing more. However, perhaps he will go on to ask what is the force of "merely" and "nothing more," as if a corruption were not an evil great enough in itself. But let me ask him in turn, *could* his *present* system, in which he glories so much, by any possibility be corrupted, to use his word, into monasticism? is there any sort of tendency in it towards—rather, are not all its tendencies *from*—such a result? If so, it is plain that the religious temper of Protestant times is not like that of the primitive Church, the existing liability in systems to certain degeneracies respectively being a sort of index of the tone and temper of each. As the corruptions, so are the respective originals. If his system never could become superstitious, it is not primitive. Clearly, then, whether or not Monachism is right, he at least is wrong, as differing in mind and spirit from that first Christian system, which *did* become monastic.

One great purpose answered by Monachism in the early ages was the maintenance of the Truth in times and places in which great masses of Catholics had let it slip from them. Under such sad circumstances, the spouse of Christ "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God." Thus in those perilous Arian waters, which "the serpent cast out after the woman,"

> When withering blasts of error swept the sky,
> And Love's last flowers seemed fain to droop and die,
> How sweet, how lone the ray benign
> On sheltered nooks of Palestine!
> Then to his early home did Love repair,
> And cheered his sickening heart with his own native air.

That was the cave of Bethlehem, to which St. Jerome retired; but Augustine's monasteries were not intended for this purpose. They were intended as the refuge of piety and holiness, when the increasing spread of religion made Christians more secular. And we may confidently pronounce that such provisions, in one shape or other, will always be attempted by the more serious and anxious part of the community, whenever Christianity is generally professed. In Protestant countries, where monastic orders are unknown, men run into separatism with this ob-

ject. Methodism has carried off many a man who was sincerely attached to the Established Church, merely because that Church will admit nothing but what it considers "rational" and "sensible" in religion.

There is another reason for such establishments, which applies particularly to women; convents are as much demanded, in the model of a perfect Church, by Christian charity, as monastic bodies can be by Christian zeal. I know not any more distressing development of the cruel temper of Protestantism, than the determined, bitter, and scoffing spirit in which it has set itself against institutions which give dignity and independence to the position of women in society. As matters stand, marriage is almost the only shelter which a defenceless portion of the community has against the rude world;—a maiden life, that holy estate, is not only left in desolateness, but oppressed with heartless ridicule and insult;—whereas, foundations for single females, under proper precautions, at once hold out protection to those who avail themselves of them, and give dignity to the single state itself, thus saving numbers from the temptation of throwing themselves rashly away upon un-

worthy objects, thereby transgressing their own sense of propriety, and embittering their future life.

And if women have themselves lost so much by the established state of things, what has been the loss of the poor, sick, and aged, to whose service they might consecrate that life which they refuse to shackle by the marriage vow? what has been the loss of the ignorant, sinful, and miserable, among whom those only can move without indignity who bear a religious character upon them; for whom they only can intercede or exert themselves, who have taken leave of earthly hopes and fears; who are secured by their holy resolve, from the admiring eye or the persuasive tongue, and can address themselves to the one heavenly duty to which they have set themselves with singleness of mind? Those who are unmarried, and who know, and know that others know, that they are likely one day to marry, who are exposed to the thousand subtle and fitful feelings of propriety, which, under such circumstances, are ever springing up in the modest breast, with a keen sensitiveness ever awake, and the chance of indefinable sympathies with others any moment arising, such persons surely may be

beautiful in mind, and noble and admirable in conduct, but they cannot take on them the high office of Sisters of Mercy.

However, this chapter is to have nothing to do with monasteries or communities, if this be any relief to the Protestant reader, but is to furnish a specimen of what to some persons may seem as bad, yet has been undeniably a practice of Christians, not from the fourth century, but from the time of St. Philip's daughters, viz.: the private and domestic observance of an ascetic life for religion's sake, and to the honour of Christ.

"There were always ascetics in the Church," says the Protestant Bingham, "but not always monks retiring to the deserts and mountains, or living in monasteries and cells, as in after ages. Such were all those that inured themselves to greater degrees of abstinence and fasting than other men. In like manner, they who were more than ordinarily intent upon the exercise of prayer, and spent their time in devotion, were justly thought to deserve the name of ascetics. The exercise of charity and contempt of the world in any extraordinary degree, as when men gave up their whole estate to the service of God

or use of the poor, was another thing that gave men the denomination and title of ascetics. The widows and virgins of the Church, and all such as confined themselves to a single life, were reckoned among the number of ascetics, though there was neither cloister nor vow to keep them under this obligation. Origen alludes to this name, when he says the number of those who exercised themselves in perpetual virginity among the Christians, was great in comparison of those few who did it among the Gentiles. Lastly, all such as exercised themselves with uncommon hardships or austerities, for the greater promotion of piety and religion, as in frequent watchings, humicubations, and the like, had the name ascetics also."—*Antiqu.* vii. 1, § 1—3.

At present the only representatives among Protestants of these ancient solitaries are found in those persons whom they commonly taunt and ridicule under the name of "old maids" and "single gentlemen;" and it sometimes is seriously objected to the primitive doctrine of celibacy, that "bachelors are just the most selfish, unaccommodating, particular, and arbitrary persons in the community;" while "ancient spinsters are the most disagreeable, cross, gossiping, and miserable

of their sex." Dreariness unmitigated, a shivering and hungry spirit, a soul preying on itself, a heart without an object, affections unemployed, life wasted, self-indulgence in prosperous circumstances, envy and malice in straitened; deadness of feeling in the male specimen, and impotence of feeling in the female; concentrated selfishness in both; such are the only attributes with which the imagination of modern times can invest St. Ambrose, bishop and confessor, or St. Macrina, sister of the great Basil. Now it may seem an unaccountable waywardness in one who has been brought up in the pure light of the nineteenth century, but I really am going to say a few words about such an old maid, or holy virgin, as we please to call her. In the year 413, the rich and noble Demetrias, a descendant of some of the most illustrious Roman houses, and moving in the highest circles, as we now speak, of the metropolis of the world, devoted herself at Carthage to a single life. It will be worth while to relate some particulars of her history.

She was the daughter of Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius, who was consul A.D. 395, and Anicia Juliana, his relation. Her father, who died young, was son of the celebrated Sextus

Probus, prefect of Italy from 368 to 375, who addressed St. Ambrose, while yet a catechumen, and appointed to a civil post in Liguria, in the celebrated and almost prophetic words, "Act not as magistrate, but as bishop." The riches of this prefect were so abundant, that some Persian noblemen, who in the year 390 came to Milan to St. Ambrose, went, as the second object of curiosity, to Rome, to see the grandeur of Probus. His wife, that is, the paternal grandmother of Demetrias, Anicia Faltonia Proba, belonged, as her first name shows, to one of the most noble families in Rome. The consulate seemed hereditary in it; its riches and influence were unbounded; while its members appear to have been Christians from the time of Constantine, or, as some suppose, from the time of the persecutions. Of the same illustrious house was Juliana, the mother of Demetrias.

Rome was taken by Alaric in 410; and on this most awful visitation, among other heirs of grace, three females were found in the devoted city,—Faltonia Proba, Juliana, and Demetrias,—grandmother, mother, and daughter,—two widows and a girl. Faltonia, and Juliana, her daughter-in-law, had, in the days of their prosperity, exerted themselves at Rome in favour

of St. Chrysostom, then under persecution, and now, in their own troubles, they found a comforter and guide in St. Augustine. So closely was Christendom united then, that ladies in Rome ministered to one bishop at Constantinople, and took refuge with another in Africa. At first they seem all to have fallen into the hands of the barbarians, and many of the holy virgins of the city, who had sought protection with Proba, were torn from her house. At length, obtaining liberty to leave Rome, she embarked for Africa with her daughter-in-law and grand-daughter, and a number of widows and virgins who availed themselves of her departure to escape likewise. Our history shall be continued in the following letter, written by St. Augustine to this high-born and well-connected lady:—

"AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, SERVANT OF CHRIST AND OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS, TO THAT RELIGIOUS HANDMAID OF GOD, PROBA, HEALTH IN THE LORD OF LORDS.

"Bearing in mind your request and my promise, that I would write to you on the subject of prayer, when He to whom we pray had given me time and power, I ought, without delay, to discharge my engagement, and in the love of

Christ consult your pious desire. How much that request of yours delighted me, as showing your high sense of a high duty, words cannot express. Indeed, how should you rather employ your widowhood than in continued prayer, night and day, according to the admonition of the Apostle? For he says, 'Let her that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hope in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day;' although it is at first sight strange, that one who is noble according to this world, like you, rich, and mother of such a family, and therefore, though a widow, not desolate, should have her heart engaged and supremely possessed by the care to pray, save that you have the wisdom to perceive that in this world and in this life no soul can be beyond care.

"Therefore, He who has given you that thought, is in truth doing therein what He promised so wonderfully and pitifully to His disciples, when saddened, not for themselves, but for the race of man, and despairing that any could be saved, on His saying, that it was easier for a camel to enter a needle's eye than for a rich man the kingdom of heaven; He answered them, 'With God is easy what with man is impossible.' He,

even while He was yet here in the flesh, sent the rich Zacchæus into the kingdom of heaven; and after that He was glorified by His resurrection and ascension, imparting His Holy Spirit, He made many rich persons to contemn this world, and to increase in riches by losing the desire of them. For why should *you*, for instance, be thus anxious to pray to God, but that you trusted in Him? and why should you trust in Him, did you trust in uncertain riches, and despise that most wholesome precept of the Apostle, 'Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God, that they may obtain true life'?

"And so, for love for that true life, you ought to think yourself, even in this world, desolate, whatever be your outward prosperity. In this life's darkness, in which we are pilgrims from the Lord, and walk by faith, not by sight, the Christian soul ought to esteem itself desolate, lest it cease from prayer; and to learn to fix the eye of faith on the words of divine and holy Scriptures, as a lamp in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the morning star arise in our hearts. This lamp is ineffably supplied from the Light which so shines in the darkness as not to be compre-

hended by it; by the sight of which the heart is cleansed through faith. For 'blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.' And 'we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' Then will be true life after death, and true consolation after desolation. 'When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.' This is the true life, which the rich are bid lay hold of by good works; and this is true consolation, for which the widow now has desolation, and though she have sons and grandsons, and order her household piously, urging it on all of hers that they put their trust in God, yet she says in prayer, 'For Thee my soul hath thirsted, for Thee my flesh, O how many ways, in a desert land, where there is no way and no water;' that is, in this our dying life, by whatsoever mortal consolations it be thronged, by whatsoever travellers it be followed, by whatsoever abundance it be stored. In truth, you understand how uncertain all these things are; nay, even were they not uncertain, what are they in comparison of that promised felicity?

"To obtain this blessed life, we are taught by the true blessed Life Himself to pray, not in

much speaking, as though the more wordy we were, the surer we were heard; since we pray to Him, who, as the Lord Himself says, knows our necessities before we ask of Him. But if so, it may seem strange, why, though He has forbidden much speaking, yet, while knowing our necessities before we ask of Him, He has encouraged us to pray, in the words, 'One ought always to pray, and not to faint.' It may surprise us, until we understand, that our Lord and God does not wish our will to be made clear to Him, which He cannot but know, but that, our desire being exercised in prayers, we may be able to receive what He prepares to give. In faith indeed, and hope, and charity, we are always praying, with uninterrupted desire; but we ask God in words also, at certain intervals of hours and times, that by those outward signs we may admonish ourselves, and may see into ourselves, what progress we have made in this desire, and may stimulate ourselves the more to heighten it. We recal our minds at certain hours to the business of prayer, from those other cares and businesses, by which that desire itself is, in a measure, chilled; admonishing ourselves, by the words of prayer, to reach forward to that

which we desire, lest what is already chilling may altogether cool, and may be altogether quenched, unless now and then rekindled.

"This being the case, even prolonged prayer, when one has time for it,—that is, when other good and necessary actions are not superseded, though even in the midst of them, we ought in desire ever to be praying,—such long prayer is neither wrong nor useless. Nor is this continued prayer, as some think, much speaking: many words is one thing, a continued affection another. For it is written of the Lord Himself, that He 'passed the night in prayer,' and that He prayed 'more largely;' in which what did He but set us an example?—in this world making supplications in season, with the Father hearing them for evermore.

"The brethren in Egypt are said to make frequent prayers, but those as short as possible, and somehow darted forward rapidly, lest lively attention, which is so necessary in praying, should become faint and dull by a slow performance; and thus they themselves show plainly, that this attention, as it should not be wearied out if it cannot be sustained, so it is not prematurely to be broken if it can. To speak much, is to urge

our necessities in prayer with superfluous words; but to pray much, is to knock for Him to whom we pray, with prolonged and pious exercise of the heart. This is often done more by groans than speeches, by weeping than by addresses. For He sets our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hid from Him, who, having made all things by His Word, does not ask for words of man.

"Pray, then, as a widow of Christ, who have not yet the sight of Him whose aid you entreat. And though you be most opulent, pray as one of the poor; for you have not yet the true riches of the world to come, where there is no dread of loss. Though you have children and grandchildren, and a numerous household, yet pray as one desolate; for all temporal things are uncertain, though they are to remain even to the end of this life for our consolation. And surely, remember to pray with earnestness for me. For I am unwilling that you should render to me my dangerous honour, yet should withhold that my necessary support. Christ's household prayed for Peter and for Paul; and while it is my joy that you are of His household, it is my need incomparably more than Peter or Paul, that

brotherly prayers should be my succour. Strive ye in prayer, in a peaceable and holy strife; not striving against each other, but against the devil, the enemy of all saints. By fastings, and watchings, and all chastisement of the body, prayer is especially aided. Let each of you do what she can; what one cannot, she does in her who can, if so be in her who can, she loves that, which she therefore does not do herself because she cannot. Accordingly, she who has less strength, must not hinder her who has more, and she who has more must not be hard with her who has less. For your conscience is owed to God; to none of yourselves owe ye any thing, but to love one another. May God hear you, who is able to do above what we ask or understand."—*Ep.* 130.

The exiled ladies seem to have settled down in Carthage, and we hear nothing of them for several years. At the end of that time, a remarkable event happened; Demetrias, who now had arrived at woman's estate, declared her resolve of devoting herself to a single life; as it would seem, at her own instance, though Augustine and Alypius, by this time bishop of Thagaste, were unconscious instruments in her

determination. Her mother and grandmother appear to have been backward in the matter, or rather to have destined her, as a matter of course, to a married life, and to have provided her with a husband. Fame was not slow in spreading the news of her singular resolve far and wide. The rank and prospects of the party making it, and the intercommunion of the Catholic Church, afforded reason and means for its dissemination. It reached the East, where Proba had possessions, and it penetrated into the monastery at Bethlehem, which was the home of St. Jerome. This celebrated Father was then in his eighty-third year; but "his eye was not dim, neither were his teeth moved." Old age neither hindered nor disinclined him from taking an interest in the general concerns of the Church. At the instance of Proba and Juliana, he addressed to Demetrias a letter, or rather tract, in order to encourage her in her determination; and as it happens to relate some of the circumstances under which that determination was made, it may suitably here be introduced to the reader's notice.

Before entering into them, a word or two about St. Jerome. I do not scruple then to say,

that, were he not a saint, there are words and ideas in his writings from which I should shrink; but as he *is* a saint, I shrink with greater reason from putting myself in opposition, even in minor matters and points of detail, to one who has the infallibility of the Church pledged to his saintly perfection. I cannot, indeed, force myself to approve or like these particulars on my private judgment or feeling; but I can receive things on faith against both the one and the other. And I readily and heartily do take on faith these characteristics, words or acts, of this great Doctor of the Universal Church; and think it is not less acceptable to God or to him to give him my religious homage than my human praise.

"It is the rule of rhetoricians," says he, "to adduce grandfathers, and forefathers, and every past distinction of the line, for the glory of him who is the subject of their praise; that fertile root may make up for barren branches, and what is wanting in the fruit may show to advantage in the stem. I ought to recount the famous names of the Probi or Olybrii, and the illustrious line of Anician blood, in which none, or next to none, has failed of the consulate; or I ought to bring forward Olybrius, our virgin's

father, who, to the grief of all Rome, was unmaturely carried off. I dare not say more, lest I deal ungently with the holy matron's wound, and the recounting of his virtues be a renewing of her grief. A pious son, a dear husband, a kind lord, a courteous citizen, a consul when a boy, but a senator more illustrious in the amiableness of his life. Happy in his death, who saw not his country's ruin; still happier in his offspring, who has added to the nobility of his ancestress Demetrias, by the perpetual chastity of Demetrias his daughter.

"But what am I about? In forgetfulness of my purpose, while I advise this young maiden, I have been praising the world's goods, whereas rather it is the very praise of our virgin, that she has despised them all, regarding herself not as noble, not as surpassing rich, but as a child of man. An incredible fortitude, amid jewels and silk, troops of slaves and waiting-women, the obsequiousness and attentions of a thronging household, and the refined dainties of a lordly establishment, to have longed for painful fastings, coarse garments, spare diet! In truth, she had read the Lord's words, 'They who are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of

kings.' She gazed in wonder at the life of Elias and John Baptist, both of them with their loins girt and mortified with a leathern belt; and one of them appearing in the spirit and power of Elias, the Lord's forerunner, prophesying in his parent's womb, and even before the day of judgment praised by the Judge's voice. She admired the ardour of Anna, daughter of Phanuel, who, up to the extreme of age, served the Lord in His temple with prayer and fastings. She longed for the choir of Philip's four virgin daughters, and wished herself one of these, who, by virginal chastity, had gained the gift of prophecy. By these and like meditations, she nourished her mind, fearing nothing more than to grieve grandmother and mother, whose pattern encouraged her, whose intention frightened her,—not that the holy resolve displeased them, but, for the greatness of the thing, they durst not wish it. A trouble came upon that recruit of Christ, and, like Esther, a hatred of her apparel. They say who saw her and know, (holy and noble ladies, whom the fierce tempest of enemies drove from the Gallic coast to inhabit these holy places, by way of Africa), that at nights, when no one knew, except the virgins

in her mother's and grandmother's company, she was never clad in linen, never reposed on soft down; but on the bare earth, with her tiny hair-cloth for bedding, and her face bedewed with continual tears, there was she, prostrate in heart at her Saviour's knees, that He would accept her resolve, fulfil her longing, and soften grandmother and mother.

"Why so many words? When now the day of her marriage was at hand, and the wedding apartment was preparing, secretly, and without witnesses, and with the night for her comforter, it is said she armed herself by counsels such as these: 'What doest thou, Demetrias? why such fright in defending thy honour? thou must be free and bold. If such thy fear in peace, what had been thy deed in martyrdom? If thou canst not brook the look of relatives, how couldst thou brook the tribunal of persecutors? If man's pattern does not stir thee, let Agnes, blessed martyr, encourage and quiet thee, who overcame her age and her tyrant, and consecrated by martyrdom her profession of chastity. Thou knowest not, poor maid, thou knowest not, it seems, to whom thou owest thy virginity. It is a while since thou didst tremble amid barbarian

hands, and didst hide thyself in the bosom and the robe of grandmother and mother. Thou didst see thyself a captive, and thy honour not thine own. Thou didst shudder at the savage faces of the foe; didst see with silent groan God's virgins carried off. Thy city, once the head of the world, is the Roman people's grave; and wilt thou on the Libyan shore, an exile, accept an exile spouse? Who shall be thy bride-maid? What train shall conduct thee? Shall the harsh Punic sing thy liberal Fescennine? Away with all delay. God's "perfect charity casteth out fear." Take the shield of faith, the breastplate of justice, the helmet of salvation: go out to battle. Honour rescued has its own martyrdom. Why apprehensive of thy grandmother? why in fear of thy parent? Perhaps they have a will, because they deem that you have none.' On fire with these incentives, and many more, she cast from her the ornaments of her person and secular dress, as if they were encumbrances to her resolve. Costly necklaces, precious pearls, brilliant jewels, she replaces in their cabinet; she puts on a common tunic, and over it a more common cloak; and, without notice, suddenly throws herself at her grand-

mother's knees, showing who she was, only by weeping and lamentation. Aghast was that holy and venerable lady, seeing the altered dress of her grandchild; while her mother stood astounded with delight. What they wished, they could not believe. Their voice was gone; their cheek flushed and paled, they feared, they rejoiced; their thronging thoughts went to and fro. Grandchild and grandmother, daughter and mother, rush tumultuously upon each other's lips. They weep abundantly for joy, they raise the sinking maid with their hands, they clasp her trembling form. They acknowledge in her resolve their own mind, and they express their joy that the virgin was making a noble family more noble by her virginity. She had found a deed which she might offer to her race,—a deed to slake the ashes of the Roman city. Gracious Jesu! what exultation then in the whole household. As if from a fruitful root many virgins budded out at once, and a crowd of dependents and handmaidens followed the example of their patroness and mistress. The profession of virginity became rife in every house; their rank in the flesh various, their reward of chastity the same. I say too little. All the Churches through

Africa almost danced for joy. Not cities alone, but towns, villages, even cottages, were pervaded by the manifold fame of it. All the islands between Africa and Italy were filled with this news; it tripped not in its course, and the rejoicing ran forward. Then Italy put off her mourning garb, and the shattered walls of Rome in part recovered their pristine splendour, thinking that God was propitious to themselves in the perfect conversion of their nursling. The report penetrated to the shores of the East, and even in the inland cities the triumph of Christian glory was heard. Who of Christ's virgins but boasted in her fellowship with Demetrias? what mother but cried blessing upon thy womb, O Juliana? I never praised in Proba the antiquity of her race, the greatness of her wealth and influence, either as a wife or a widow, as others, perhaps, in a mercenary strain. My object is, in ecclesiastical style, to praise the grandmother of my virgin, and to render thanks that she has strengthened her grandchild's will by her own. Else my monastic cell, common food, mean dress, and age upon the eve of death, and store for a brief span, rid me of all reproach of flattery. And now, what remains of my

treatise shall be directed to the virgin herself: a noble virgin: noble not less by sanctity than by birth, who is in the more danger of a lapse, the higher she has ascended.

"One thing especially, child of God, will I admonish you, to possess your mind with a love of sacred reading. When you were in the world, you loved the things of the world; to rouge and whiten your complexion, to deck your hair, and rear a tower of borrowed locks. Now, since you have left the world, and by a second step after baptism have made engagement with your adversary, saying to him, 'I renounce thee, devil, with thy words, thy pomp, and thy works:' keep the covenant thou hast pledged. I speak this, not from any misgiving about you, but according to the duty of a fearful and cautious monitor, dreading in you even what is so safe.

"The arms of fasting are also to be taken up, and David's words to be sung, 'I humbled my soul in fasting;' and 'I ate ashes as it were bread;' and, 'When they were sick, I put on sackcloth.' For a meal, Eve was cast out of Paradise; Elias, exercised by a fast of forty days, is carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire. Moses is fed forty days and nights by intercourse

and converse with God; proving, in his own instance, the exact truth of the saying, 'Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' The Saviour of man, who left us the pattern of His perfection and life, after baptism, is forthwith taken in the Spirit to fight against the devil, and after beating down and crushing him, to give him over to His own disciples to trample on. Against the young of either sex our enemy uses the ardour of their time of life, and 'setteth on fire the career of our life,' and fulfils Osee's saying, 'They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker,' which is cooled again by God's pity and the rigour of fastings. These are the fiery darts of the devil, which both wound and inflame, and are prepared by the king of Babylon for the three children. And as at that time a Fourth, having the form as of the Son of Man, mitigated the infinite heat, and amid the conflagration of a raging furnace, taught the flame to lose its virtue, and to threaten to the eye what to the touch it did not fulfil; so, also, in a virginal mind, by celestial dew and strict fasts, the warmth of youth is quenched, and the life of Angels is compassed in a human frame.

"Nor yet do we enjoin on you unmeasured fastings, or an extravagant abstinence from food, which at once breaks delicate frames, and makes them sickly, ere the foundation of holy conversation is yet laid. Even philosophers have held that 'virtues are a mean, vices extremes;' and hence one of the seven sages says, 'Nothing too much.' You should fast short of panting and failing in breath, and of being carried or led by your companions; but so far as to subdue your appetite, yet to be able to attend to sacred reading, psalms, and watching as usual. Fasting is not an absolute virtue, but the foundation of other virtues; and 'sanctification and honour,' 'without which no man shall see God,' is a step for such as are mounting to the highest, nor will it crown the virgin, if it be alone.

"Imitate your heavenly Spouse; 'be subject' to your grandmother and mother. See no man, youths especially, except with them. It is their pattern, it is the holy conduct of their house, which has taught you to seek virginity, to know Christ's precepts, to know what is expedient for you, what you ought to choose. Therefore, do not think that what you are belongs to yourself alone; it is theirs who have brought out in you

their own virtue, and budded forth in you, as the most costly flower of 'honourable marriage and the bed undefiled;' a flower which will not bear its perfect fruit till you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and ever remember what is written, 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' Now where grace is in question, there is not recompensing of works, but bounty of a giver, according to the Apostle's saying, 'Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' And yet to will and not to will is ours; yet not ours, what is even ours, without God's showing mercy.

"I end as I began, not content with one admonition. Love Holy Scriptures, and wisdom will love thee; love her, and she will keep thee; honour her, and she will embrace thee. Let these be the ornaments abiding on thy neck and in thine ears. Let thy tongue know nought but Christ; let it have power to utter nought but what is holy. Let the sweetness of thy grandmother and mother ever be in thy mouth, whose following is the very form of holiness."—*Ep.* 130.

Sage and sobering as is the advice here given

(and I wish I had room to extract more of it), yet, I suppose, under the circumstances, a calm looker-on might have thought it not uncalled for,—might have apprehended, as perhaps St. Jerome did himself, that when a young lady was brought out as a pattern to the whole Catholic world, written to and about by bishops and doctors of the Church, by grave and aged men, the most remarkable personages of their time,—under such circumstances, without some special and almost miraculous gift of grace, the said maiden's head stood in danger of being turned by the compliment. And holy and admirable as Demetrias was, she was, in fact, for awhile in hazard, and that from the influence of the particular heresy of the day, which was a temptation especially adapted to her case. When sinners repent and turn to God, and, by way of showing sorrow and amendment, subject themselves to voluntary mortifications, the memory of what they were, and the prospect of judgment to come, are likely, it is to be hoped, to keep them from spiritual pride. But when a young and innocent female, whose baptismal robe the world has not sullied, takes up a self-denying life in order to be nearer to God, and to please

Him more entirely, who does not see the danger she is in of self-importance and self-conceit,—the danger of forgetting that she is by nature a sinner, as others, and that whatever she has of spiritual excellence, and whatever she does praiseworthy, is entirely of God's supernatural grace? And to a person so disposed, Pelagius was at that day at hand a ready tempter, prepared to sanctify all these evil feelings, and to seal and fix them as if on the basis of religious principle. The heresiarch was on the earth in person, when Demetrias renounced the world, and he did not neglect the occasion. By this time the noble exiles had apparently returned to Rome; and Pelagius despatched a letter, or rather treatise, still extant, with a view of instructing and guiding the daughter of the Olybrii and Anicii. He professes to write it at the instance of Juliana; nor is it surprising that the latter should not have been able to detect the doctrinal errors of a man of unblemished life, who, three years after, contrived to baffle the Apostolic see,—the very see which St. Jerome, in a part of the foregoing letter which I have not found room to translate, recommends to Demetrias as the guide of her faith.

It is not to my purpose here to make extracts from Pelagius's treatise, which is full of good advice, and does no more than imply, though it does imply, his uncatholic opinions of the power and perfectibility of unaided human nature. These opinions one would almost suspect that Jerome was indirectly opposing in some portions of the foregoing letter, as if the aged saint, now near his end, had a forecast of the temptation which was coming on mother and daughter. But however this may be, we have, in the year 417, a direct remonstrance, addressed by Augustine and Alypius to Juliana, on the subject of Pelagius's treatise, the author of which, however, they did not know for certain at the time. Proba, at this date, seems to have been dead.

"It was a great satisfaction to us, lady,—honoured for services of Christian duty, and our deservedly illustrious daughter,—that your letter happened to find us together at Hippo, and able to convey to you our joint gratulations at the news of your welfare, and lovingly assure you of ours, which we trust is dear to you. For we are sure you understand the debt of religious affection we owe you, and the care we have for you in the sight of God and man. So highly,

indeed, has our ministry been blessed in your house, by our Saviour's grace and pity, that when a human marriage had already been arranged, the holy Demetrias preferred the spiritual embrace of that Spouse who is beautiful above the children of men, and who is wedded in order that the spirit may be more fruitful while the flesh remains inviolate. Yet this influence of our exhortations on that believing and noble virgin would have been unknown to us, had not your own letters most happily and authentically informed us, after our departure, when in a little while she had made profession of virginal chastity, that this great gift of God, which He plants and waters by His servants, Himself giving the increase, had been the produce of our husbandry.

"No one, under these circumstances, can call it intrusion, if, with a most affectionate interest, we are solicitous in warning you against doctrines contrary to the grace of God. For though the Apostle bids us be instant in preaching the word, not in season only, but out of season, we do not reckon you among such as would deem our word or writing out of season, when we speak to warn you seriously against unsound

doctrine. Accordingly you accepted with gratitude our former admonition in the letter to which we now reply, saying, 'I am full of thanks for your reverence's pious advice, bidding me deny my ears to these men, who often corrupt our venerable faith with their erroneous writing.'

"Your following words, in which you say that 'you and your small household are far removed from such men; and that your whole family so strictly follows the Catholic faith as never to have deviated, never been betrayed into any heresy, not only fatal, but even small,' give us still greater ground for speaking to you concerning those who are trying to corrupt what hitherto has been sound. How can we forbear to warn those whom we are so bound to love, after reading a treatise which some one has written to the holy Demetrias, or which came to yourself (you shall inform us on this point in your reply), from which that virgin of Christ may learn, if so be, that her virginal sanctity and all her spiritual riches are her own work; and, as a perfection of her blessedness, may be taught (if we may say the words) to be ungrateful to her God? So it is; these are the words, 'You are possessed of that for which you are deservedly

preferred to others; nay, the more, in that your personal nobility and opulence belong to your friends, not to you; but spiritual riches none but yourself can provide for you. In that is your right praise, your deserved preference, which cannot be except of thee and in thee.' Forbid it, that a virgin of Christ should take pleasure in such words, who has a religious understanding of the innate poverty of the human heart, and therefore wears no ornaments there but the gifts of her Bridegroom! Who was it that separated you from the mass of death and perdition which is in Adam? He surely, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. When, then, a man hears the Apostle ask, 'Who made thee to differ?' shall he answer, 'My religious will, my faith, my justice,' and not rather go on to hear what follows, 'What hast thou which thou hast not received?'

"We have that opinion of the Christian conduct and humility in which this pious maiden has been trained, as to feel assured, that on reading the words in question, if she read them, she sighed deeply, and humbly struck her breast, perhaps wept, and earnestly prayed the Lord, to whom she is dedicated, and by whom she is sanctified, that as the words were not hers, but

another's, so her faith may not be of such a temper as to admit of the thought that she has what may give her title to glory in herself, not in the Lord. For her glory is indeed in herself, not in the words of others, according to the Apostle's saying, 'Let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself, and not in another.' But forbid it that *she* should be her own glory, and not He, to whom it is said, 'My glory, and the lifter up of my head.' For then is her glory religiously in her, when God, who is in her, is Himself her glory; from whom she has all the goods which make her good, and will have all which will make her better, as far as in this life she can be better; and which will make her perfect, when she is perfected by divine grace, not by human praise.

"However, we had rather have your assurance in writing, that we are not deceived in this view of her feelings. We know full well that you and all yours are, and ever have been, worshippers of the undivided Trinity. But there are fatal heresies on other points of doctrine. Such is that which has been the subject of this letter, on which, perhaps, we have said more than is sufficient to a judgment so faithful and conscientious as yours is."—*Ep.* 188.

That this letter produced the result intended, cannot be doubted. What became of Juliana after this does not appear, though it is supposed she died at Rome. As to Demetrias, it is interesting to find extant a treatise of a later date addressed to her on the subject of humility. It has been ascribed by some to St. Prosper, by others to St. Leo, and introduces the subject of Pelagianism. A sentence or two will show us the style of the work. "Enter," says the author, "into the chamber of thy mind, and in the secret place of that thy most pure conscience look round on what ornaments are there stored up for thee; and, whatever splendid, whatever beautiful and costly, thou shalt there find, doubt not it is of a divine workmanship and gift, so that in all the goods of thy opulence acknowledge both the grace of the Giver, and His right of ownership. For thou hast received what thou hast; and whatever has accrued to thee by the diligence of thy efforts, through Him has it been increased by whom it was begun. Therefore, thou must use what God has bestowed; and must even beg of Him that thou mayst use His gifts faithfully and wisely."—*c.* 22. It may be observed that this author, whoever he is, seems not to have

een St. Austine's letter to Juliana on the same ubject. It is pleasant to find that, while the ncient bishops and teachers exhorted the rich o renunciation of the world, they did not flatter hem on their complying, but kept a vigilant eye n them, from youth to age, lest they should find t temptation where they looked for a blessing.

This work was written about A.D. 430; the ast notice which history has preserved to us of his holy and interesting lady is after the sack of Rome by Genseric, when she might be about ixty years of age. She ends as she began. The acred edifices had suffered in various ways from he fury and cupidity of the barbarians; St. Leo, vho had dissuaded Genseric from burning the ity, exerted his influence in various directions fter his retiring, to add to the number of hurches. Under his advice, Demetrias built he Basilica of St. Stephen, on property of her wn, situated on the Latin road, three miles rom Rome. With mention of this good deed, f which there is yearly memory in the Roman reviary on the 11th of April, the festival of St. Leo, we may suitably take our leave of one vho preferred to give her wealth to the Church, o spending it in the aggrandizement of some atrician house.

CHAPTER XII.

MARTIN AND MAXIMUS.

"He lieth in ambush, that he may catch the poor man; he will crouch and fall, when he shall have power over the poor."

WHO has not heard of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, and Confessor? In our part of the world at least he is well known, as far as name goes, by the churches dedicated to him. Even from British times a church has existed under his tutelage in the afterwards metropolitan city of Canterbury; though we know little or nothing of churches to St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Basil, or St. Athanasius. Considering how many of our temples are called after the Apostles, and how many of them piously preserve the earthly name of those who may be said to "have no memorial," and are "as if they had never been," as St. George, or St. Nicolas; it is a peculiarity in St. Martin's history that he should be at once so well known and so widely

venerated; renowned in this life, yet honoured after it. And such honour has been paid him from the first. He died in the last years of the fourth century; his successor at Tours built a chapel over his tomb in that city; St. Perpetuus, another successor, about seventy years afterwards, built a church and conveyed his relics thither. In the course of another seventy years his name had taken up its abode in Canterbury, where it remains. Soon after a church was dedicated to him at Rome, and soon after in Spain. He alone of the Confessors had a service of his own in the more ancient breviaries; he is named, too, in the mass of Pope Gregory, —which commemorates, after our Lady and the Apostles, "Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sextus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Laurence, Chrysostom, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, Hilary, *Martin*, Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, Benedict, and all Saints."

I am not going to present the reader with more than a slight sketch of his history, which we have received on very authentic testimony, as in St. Antony's case, though St. Martin, like St. Antony, has left no writings behind him. Nay, the biographer of St. Martin is not merely

a friend (such as St. Athanasius), who saw him only now and then, but he was a disciple, an intimate, an eyewitness, as well as a man of cultivated mind and classical attainments,—Sulpicius Severus, who wrote his memoir even while the subject of it was alive, and while his memory was fresh.

Martin was born about the year 316, in Pannonia, in a town which now forms part of Hungary; his father was a pagan, and had risen from the ranks to the command of a cohort. A soldier has no home, and his son was brought up at Pavia in North Italy with very little education. What influenced Martin is not known; but at the age of ten he fled to the Church against the wish of his parents, and enrolled himself as a catechumen. Under these first impressions of religion, he formed the desire of retiring to the desert as a solitary; however, things do not happen here below after our wishes; so at fifteen he was seized, upon his father's instance, and enlisted in the army. In consequence, he remained a soldier five years, and, in the course of them, was sent into Gaul. It is recorded of him, that at a time when he was stationed at Amiens, being then eighteen, he

encountered at the gate of the city a poor man without clothes. It was mid-winter, and the weather more than ordinarily severe; he had nothing on him but his single military cloak and his arms. The youth took his sword, cut the cloak in two, and gave half to the beggar. The bystanders jeered or admired, according to their turn of mind; and he went away. Next night he had a dream: he saw our Lord clad in the half cloak which he had bestowed on the poor man. The Divine Appearance commanded the youth's attention, and then said to the Angels who stood around, "Martin, yet a catechumen, hath wrapped Me in this garment." On this Martin proceeded forthwith to baptism, and two years afterwards left the army.

Of the next fourteen years we know nothing; then, he had recourse to the celebrated St. Hilary, who was afterwards bishop of Poictiers, and an illustrious confessor in the Arian troubles. Martin, however, was destined to precede him in suffering, and that in the same holy cause. He undertook a visit to his parents, who now seem to have retired into Pannonia, with a view to their conversion. When he was in the passes of the Alps he fell in with bandits. Sulpicius gives

this account of what happened:—"One of them raised an axe and aimed it at his head, but another intercepted the blow. However, his hands were bound behind him, and he was given in custody to one of them for plunder. This man took him aside, and began to ask him who he was. He answered, 'A Christian.' He then inquired whether he felt afraid. He avowed, without wavering, that he never felt so much at ease, being confident that the Lord's mercy would be specially with him in temptations; rather he felt sorry for him, who, living by robbery, was unworthy of the mercy of Christ. Entering, then, on the subject of the Gospel, he preached the Word of God to him. To be brief, the robber believed, attended on him, and set him on his way, begging his prayers. This man afterwards was seen in the profession of religion; so that the above narrative is given as he was heard to state it."—*Vit. M.* c. 4.

Martin gained his mother, but his father persisted in paganism. At this time Illyricum was almost given over to Arianism. He did not scruple to confess the Catholic doctrine there, was seized, beaten with rods publicly, and cast out of the city. Little, again, is known of these

years of his life. Driven from Illyricum, he betook himself to Milan, A.D. 356, when he was about forty years old. Here he lived several years in solitude, till he was again driven out by the Arian bishop Auxentius. On leaving Hilary, he had promised to return to him; and now Hilary being restored from exile, he kept his word, after a separation of about nine or ten years. He came to Poictiers, and formed in its neighbourhood the first monastic establishment which is known to have existed in France.

He was made bishop of Tours in the year 372, about the time that Ambrose and Basil were raised to their respective sees, and that Athanasius died. There were parties who opposed Martin's election, alleging, as Sulpicius tells us, that "he was a contemptible person, unworthy of the episcopate, despicable in countenance, mean in dress, uncouth in his hair." Such were the outward signs of a monk; and a monk he did not cease to be, after that he had become a bishop. Indeed, as far as was possible, he wished to be still just what he had been, and looked back to the period of his life when he was a private man, as a time when he was more sensibly favoured with divine power than after-

wards. Sulpicius thus speaks of him in his episcopate:—

"He remained just what he was before; with the same humbleness of heart, the same meanness of dress, and with a fulness of authority and grace which responded to the dignity of a bishop without infringing on the rule and the virtue of a monk. For a while he lived in a cell built on to the church; but, unable to bear the interruptions of visitors, he made himself a monastery about two miles out of the city. So secret and retired was the place, that he did not miss the solitude of the desert. On one side it was bounded by the high and precipitous rock of a mountain, on the other the level was shut in by the river Loire, which makes a gentle bend. There was but one way into it, and that very narrow. His own cell was of wood. Many of the brethren made themselves dwellings of the same kind, but most of them hollowed out the stone of the mountain which was above them. There were eighty scholars who were under training after the pattern of their saintly master. No one had aught his own; all things were thrown into a common stock. It was not lawful, as to most monks, to buy or sell any

thing. They had no art except that of transcribing, which was assigned to the younger: the older gave themselves up to prayer. They seldom left their cell, except to attend the place of prayer. They took their meal together after the time of fasting. No one tasted wine, except compelled by bodily weakness. Most of them were clad in camel's hair; a softer garment was a crime; and what of course makes it more remarkable is, that many of them were accounted noble, who, after a very different education, had forced themselves to this humility and patience; and we have lived to see a great many of them bishops. For what is that city or church which did not covet priests from the monastery of Martin?"—*Vit. M.* c. 7.

Once on a time, a person whom he had benefited by his prayers, sent him a hundred pounds of silver. Martin put it aside for redeeming captives. Some of the brothers suggested that their own fare was scanty and their clothing deficient. "We," he made answer, "are fed and clad by the Church, provided we seem to appropriate nothing to ourselves."—*Dial.* iii. 19.

It will be seen from the former of these passages, that St. Martin, though not himself a man

of learning, made his monastic institution subservient to theological purposes. This monastery became afterwards famous under the name of the Abbey of Marmoutier; eventually it conformed to the Benedictine rule.

St. Martin was a man of action as well as of meditation; and his episcopate is marked with strenuous deeds sufficient to convince all readers of his history, that, whatever blame this age may be disposed to throw on him, it cannot be imputed on the side of mysticism or indolence. Gaul was, even at this time, almost pagan: its cities, indeed, had long enjoyed the light of Christianity, and had had the singular privilege of contributing both Greek and Latin Fathers to the Catholic Church. Marseilles, Lyons, Vienne, Toulouse, Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Orleans, Paris, Clermont, and Limoges, seem to have been episcopal sees; but the country people had never been evangelised, and still frequented their idol temples. It is difficult to assign the limits of Martin's diocese, and perhaps they were not very accurately determined. On the east of Tours, we hear of his evangelical prowess in Burgundy and the neighbourhood of Autun, and on the north towards Chartres; the nearest

sees round about were Poictiers, Limoges, Clermont, and Orleans; and his presence is mentioned, though perhaps only on political or synodal business, at Paris, Treves, and Vienne.

In the first years of Martin's episcopate, heathen sacrifices were forbidden by law; and the resignation with which the pagans submitted to the edict, at least showed, what the history of the times so often shows otherwise, that their religion had no great hold on their hearts. Martin took upon him to enter and destroy the kingdom of Satan with his own hands. He went, unarmed, among the temples, the altars, the statues, the groves, and the processions of the false worship, attended by his monastic brethren: he presented himself to the barbarian multitude, converted them, and made them join with him in the destruction of their time-honoured establishment of error. What were his weapons of success does not appear, unless we are willing to accept his contemporary biographer's statement, that he was attended by a divine influence manifesting itself in distinct and emphatic miracles. In consequence of his triumphant exertions, he is considered the Apostle of Gaul; and this high mission is sufficient to account for his miraculous

power. It is on this ground that even Protestants have admitted a similar gift in St. Augustine, Apostle of England.

Nor had Martin only to do with barbarians and idolaters; he came across a powerful sovereign. This had been the lot of St. Basil a few years before, but with a very different kind of warfare. Basil was assailed by persecution; Martin was attempted by flattery and blandishment. It is harder to resist the world's smiles than the world's frowns. We began with the combat between Basil and Valens; let us end with a tale of temptation, which a crafty monarch practised upon a simple monk.

The sovereign with whom Martin came into collision was Maximus, the usurper of Britain, Gaul, and Spain, with whom we are made familiar in the history of St. Ambrose. Gratian becoming unpopular, Maximus had been proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in Britain, had landed on the opposite coast with a great portion of the British nation (who emigrated on the occasion, and settled afterwards in Bretagne), and had been joined by the armies of Gaul. Gratian had fled from Paris to Lyons, attended by only 300 horse; the governor of the Lyonese

had played the traitor, and Maximus's general of horse, who was in pursuit of the emperor, had come up and murdered him. The usurper incurred, not unjustly, the stigma of the crime by which he profited, though he protested, whether truly or not, that he was not privy to the intentions of his subordinate. He was equally earnest, and perhaps sincere, in maintaining that he had been proclaimed by the legions of Britain against his will. So much Sulpicius confirms, speaking of him, as "a man to be named for every excellence of life, if it had been allowed him either to refuse a diadem placed upon him, not legitimately, by a mutinous soldiery, or to abstain from civil war;" "but," he continues, "a great sway could neither be refused without hazard, nor be held without arms."—*Dial.* ii. 7.

Maximus established his court at Treves, and thither proceeded a number of bishops to intercede, as in duty bound, for criminals, captives, exiles, proscribed persons, and others whom the civil commotion had compromised. Martin went up with the rest, and it soon became obvious to the world that there was some vast difference between him and them; that they allowed themselves in flattery and subserviency towards the

usurper, but that Martin recollected that he had the authority of an Apostle, and was bound to treat the fortunate soldier, not according to his success, but according to his conduct.

Maximus asked him, again and again, to the imperial table, but in vain; he declined, "alleging," according to Sulpicius, "that he could not partake in the hospitality of one who had deprived one emperor of his dominions, another of his life." "However," continues our biographer, "when Maximus declared that he had not of his own will assumed the imperial power; that he had but defended in arms that compulsory sovereignty which the troops had, by a Divine Providence, imposed on him; that God's favour did not seem estranged from one who had gained such incredible success; and that he had killed no enemy, except in the field,—at length, overcome either by his arguments or his prayers, he came to supper, the emperor rejoicing wonderfully that he had prevailed with him."—*Vit. M.* c. 23.

Martin seems to have been not quite satisfied with his concession, and Maximus seemed determined to make the most of it. The day of

entertainment was made quite a gala day; the first personages about the court were invited; the monk Martin was placed on a couch close to the usurper, and near him was his attendant presbyter, seated between two counts of the highest rank, the brother and uncle of Maximus. In the middle of the banquet, according to custom, the wine-cup was handed to Maximus; he transferred it to Martin, wishing him first to taste, and then to pass it to himself with the blessing and good auspice which a bishop could convey. Martin took it, and drank; but he saw through the artifice; and, instead of handing it to the emperor, passed it to his own presbyter, as being higher in true rank, as Sulpicius says, than any others, even the most noble, who were there assembled.

Maximus was a crafty man; and perhaps he thought he had discovered a weak point in Martin. He broke out into admiration of his conduct, and his guests did the like. Martin gained more by loftiness than others by servility. The feast ended; not so the emperor's assaults upon a saintly personage. He presented him with a vase of porphyry, and it was accepted.

Maximus now became a penitent, with what

sincerity it is impossible to say. And at length, it would appear, he obtained absolution from Martin for his crimes; he sent for him often, and communed with him on the present and the future, on the glory of the faithful and the immortality of saints. Meanwhile the empress took her part in humbling herself before one who indeed, of all men alive, had certainly, in his miraculous power, the clearest credentials of his commission from the Author of all grace. She attended the exhortations of the aged bishop, and wept at his feet: but let us hear Sulpicius's account of what happened. "Martin," he says, "who never had been touched by any woman, could not escape this lady's assiduous, or rather servile attentions. Neither the power of dominion, nor the dignity of empire, nor the diadem, nor the purple did she regard. Prostrate on the ground, they could not tear her from Martin's feet. At length she begged her husband, and then both begged Martin, to allow her, by herself, without assistance of attendants, to serve him up a repast; nor could the blessed man hold out any longer. The hands of the empress go through the chaste service; she spreads a seat: she places a table by it; water

she offers for his hands; food, which she herself had cooked, she sets before him; she at a distance, as servants are taught, stands motionless, as if fixed to the ground, while he sits; showing in all things the reverence of an attendant, and the humbleness of a handmaid. She mixes his draught, she presents it to him. When the small meal is ended, she sweeps up with all carefulness the broken bits and crumbs of bread, preferring such relics to imperial dainties. Blessed woman, in such devotion willing to be compared to her who came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon!"—*Dial.* ii. 7. Yes, blessed the princess who performs such humble service; but "a more blessed thing is it to give rather than to receive." Let us see what came of it.

Maximus was not only a penitent, but he was a champion of the orthodox faith, nay, even to enforcing it with the sword. And Martin, while at court, had not only to intercede for the partisans of Gratian, but also, if possible, to rescue from the said imperial sword, and from the zeal of some brother bishops, certain heretics who had been treated with extreme severity, both by the local hierarchy and the civil power.

These were the Priscillianists of Spain, and their principal persecutor was Ithacius, a bishop of the same country. Their history was as follows: Priscillian, a man of birth, ability, and character, undertook in Spain the dissemination of an Egyptian form of the Gnostic or the Manichæan heresy, and formed a party. The new opinion spread through all parts of the country, and was embraced by some of its bishops. A Council condemned them; they retaliated by consecrating Priscillian to the see of Avila. On this the Council called in the civil power against the heretics, and the heretical bishops on their part made for Pope Damasus at Rome. Failing to circumvent the see of St. Peter, they betook themselves to Milan. Failing with St. Ambrose, they bribed the officers of the court; and whereas the Council had gained an imperial rescript, exterminating them from the whole Roman Empire, they obtained another restoring them to their own churches in Spain. This was the state of things when Gratian lost his life by the revolt of Maximus, who was in consequence naturally disposed to take part against the heretics whom Gratian's government had been at that moment supporting.

Ithacius, the acting Bishop of the Council, had been obliged to fly to Gaul; and in A.D. 384, when the civil troubles were over, he went up to Treves, had an interview with Maximus, and obtained from him a summons of the heretics to a Council to be held at Bourdeaux. Priscillian was obliged to attend; but being put on his defence, instead of answering, he appealed to the new emperor, and the orthodox bishops committed the scandalous fault of allowing his appeal.

Such an appeal, in a matter of faith or internal discipline, was contrary at once to principle and to precedent. It was inconsistent with the due maintenance of our Lord's canon, "Cæsar's to Cæsar, and God's to God;" and with the rule contained in St. Paul's charge to Timothy to "keep the deposit;" and it had been already condemned in the case of the Donatists, who, on appealing to Constantine against the Church, had incurred both the protest of the Catholic Fathers, and the indignant refusal of the emperor. However, the Ithacians had united themselves too closely to the State to be able to resist its encroachments. This is the point of time in which Martin enters into the history of the dis-

pute; Priscillian was brought to Treves; Ithacius, his accuser, followed; and there they found Martin, come thither, as we have seen, on matters of his own.

Martin naturally viewed the Ithacian faction with displeasure; he condemned the appeals which in a matter of faith had been made to the civil power, and he looked forward with horror to the sort of punishment which that power was likely to inflict. Accordingly, he remonstrated incessantly with Ithacius on the course he was pursuing; and Ithacius, a man of loud speech, and luxurious and prodigal habits, did not scruple to retort upon the devout and ascetic Martin, that the monk was nothing short of a Gnostic himself, and therefore naturally took the part of the Priscillianists.

Unable to persuade his brother bishops, Martin addressed himself to Maximus, representing to him, to use the words of Sulpicius, "that it was more than enough, that, after the heretics had been condemned by an episcopal decision, they should be removed from their churches; but that it was a new and unheard-of impiety for a temporal judge to take cognizance of an ecclesiastical cause."—*Hist.* ii. The interposition

of one to whom emperor and empress were paying such extraordinary court, of course was of no slight weight. It was effectual for protecting the Priscillianists all the time he continued at Treves; but the time came when he must take his departure for his own home; and before doing so, he exacted a promise of the usurper that nothing sanguinary should be perpetrated against them.

He went; Ithacius did *not* go; the promise was forgotten; matters went on as if Martin had never been at Treves; the heretics were tried by the judge of the palace, and were found guilty of witchcraft and various immoralities. Priscillian and others were beheaded, and others afterwards were killed and banished: Ithacius sheltered himself under the protection of Maximus, and Maximus wrote to the see of St. Peter, not to justify, but to take credit for his conduct.

What return he, or rather his ecclesiastical advisers, received from Siricius, the pope of the day, and from the body of the Church, need not here be mentioned in detail. Suffice it to say, that a solemn protest was entered against their proceedings, in the course of the following years, by St. Siricius, St. Ambrose, and Councils held

at Milan and Turin. Ithacius was deposed, excommunicated, and banished. Felix, bishop of Treves, though a man of irreproachable character, and not bishop at the time of the crime, yet, as a partisan of the guilty bishops, was excommunicated with all who supported him; and when St. Ambrose came to Treves on his second embassy, he separated himself not only from the adherents of Maximus, but of Ithacius too. This, however, is to digress upon subsequent and general history, with which we have nothing to do; let us go back to St. Martin.

On the year that followed the execution of Priscillian, Martin had again to visit Treves, as a mediator for certain civil governors, Narses and Leucadius, whose loyalty to Gratian had gained for them the resentment of his conqueror. A Council of bishops was just then assembled in the imperial city, with the double purpose of formally acquitting Ithacius, and of consecrating Felix, who has just now been mentioned, to the vacant see of Treves. The news arrived that Martin was coming, and spread great dismay among the assembled Fathers. They betook themselves to Maximus, and gained his consent to forbid Martin's entrance into the

city, except on a promise of communicating with themselves. Martin eluded their vigilance, and entered at night. He had come, as I have said, only on political business, though such as became a bishop to undertake; but when he got to Treves, he was met with news which more intimately concerned every Catholic, and needed his more prompt and urgent intercession. A day or two before he came, the Ithacian party had prevailed on the emperor to send military commissioners into Spain to detect, arrest, pillage, and kill all heretics; a mission which, considering that the broad test of heresy which the soldiers adopted was paleness of face and peculiarity of dress, was likely to terminate in a great accession, doubtless, of wealth to the imperial treasury, but in as great a destruction of innocent persons and orthodox believers. The prospect of such outrages affected Martin still more than the severity directed against the Priscillianists; though "he was piously solicitous," says Sulpicius, "to rescue the heretics themselves, as well as the Christians, who were to be troubled under this pretence."—*Dial.* iii. 16. Accordingly, he was urgent in his intervention at court, but Maximus had by this time forgotten

the lesson of humility which, two years since, he and the empress had so dutifully learned; or perhaps he thought, for one reason or another, that he had got an advantage over Martin, and understood him. Any how, he put off from day to day his answer to Martin's request, whether in behalf of the Spanish Catholics, or of the two friends of Gratian, who had been the cause of his journey.

Meanwhile Martin refused to communicate with the party of Ithacius; a vigorous step, to which only one bishop, Theognostus, out of all there assembled, had found himself equal. The Ithacians betook themselves in haste to Maximus, "complaining," says Sulpicius, "that they were prejudged, predisposed of, if the pertinacity of Theognostus was armed by the authority of Martin; that the latter ought never to have been allowed to enter the city; that he was no longer engaged in the mere defence, but in the rescue of the heretics; that nothing was gained by the death of Priscillian, if Martin exacted reprisals for it. And lastly, they threw themselves on the ground, and with tears and lamentations implored the imperial power to show its vigour in its dealings with, after all, but one man."—

Dial. iii. 16. Maximus began to believe that Martin really was a Priscillianist.

However, he both felt a reverence for him, whatever were the grounds of it, and he understood perfectly well that Martin was not to be prevailed on by threats of personal violence. He pursued a way with him which perhaps he thought successful on the former visit of Martin. He gave the Saint a private interview, and addressed him in a complimentary manner. He alleged, that the heretics had been punished, not at the instance of the bishops, but by the secular courts in a regular way for their evil deserts; that such a procedure formed no reason for blaming and separating from Ithacius and the rest; that Theognostus, the only outstanding bishop, had been influenced by personal feelings; and that a Council had acquitted Ithacius. Finding, however, he made no way with Martin, the emperor burst out into anger, quitted him hastily, and gave orders for the execution of Narses and Leucadius, the partisans of Gratian, on whose behalf Martin had come to Treves. The news of this determination came to the Saint during the following night: no time was to be lost; his kindness of heart was too much for

him; he gave way; he entered the palace; he promised to communicate with the Ithacians, on condition that Narses and Leucadius should be spared, and that the military inquisitors which had been sent into Spain should be recalled. The emperor readily granted his terms in full; and the next day Felix was consecrated, Martin assisting and communicating with the persecutors of Priscillian. They urged him with much earnestness to sign an instrument in attestation of his concession, but this he refused.

Writers of great seriousness have not been unwilling to suggest, that, extraordinary as was St. Martin's habitual humility, yet he might have experienced some elation of mind from the remarkable honours which he had received from the Court on his first visit to Treves; but whatever was the cause of his change of purpose, that he might have acted better, was soon confessed by himself. Thus ended his intercourse with the great world. He had gained the object which had brought him to Treves; Maximus, too, had gained his: there was nothing more to detain him in the imperial city, and the day after his act of concession, he set off on his return to Tours.

He went on his way with downcast mind, sighing, as his biographer tells us, to think that he had even for an hour shared in a communion so unhealthy to the soul; when now an occurrence took place, which, it seems, he ever studiously concealed, though his intimate friends got acquainted with it. About ten miles from Treves, his journey lay through deep and lonely woods; he let his companions go forward, and remained by himself, examining his conscience, and first blaming, and then again defending what he had done. While he was thus engaged, he was favoured with a supernatural vision: an Angel appeared to him, and said, "Martin, thou art pricked in heart with reason; but no other escape opened to thee. Retrieve thy virtue; resume thy firmness; lest thou risk, not thy renown, but thy salvation."

Martin lived eleven years after this, but, somewhat in the spirit of Gregory Nazianzen, he never went to council or meeting of bishops again. And afterwards, when he was engaged with the *energumeni*, or demoniacs, "he used from time to time, to confess to us," says Sulpicius, "with tears, that from the mischief of that communion, which he joined for a moment, and

that not in heart, but on compulsion, he was sensible of a diminution of his supernatural gift." Sulpicius also happens to mention in another connexion, though indeed without alluding to what had passed at Treves, that in the last years of his life, "when the prefect Vincentius, a person of singular worth, and as excellent a man in every respect as was to be found in any part of Gaul, passed through Tours, he often begged of Martin to entertain him in his monastery, alleging the example of blessed Ambrose the bishop, who at that time was said now and then to receive consuls and prefects at dinner; but that the man of high mind would not grant his request, lest it should give secret entrance to vanity and elation of spirit."—*Dial.* i. 17.

Such self-imposed penances were quite in the spirit of those ages of sanctity. Notice has been taken of Gregory's silence during Lent in a former chapter; and Sulpicius in his old age, on being betrayed for an instant into an advocacy of Pelagian doctrine, punished himself with silence to the end of his life.

Martin's end was delayed till he was past the common age of man. With the weight of eighty

years upon him, he had betaken himself to a place, at the extremity of his charge, to settle a quarrel existing between the clergy there. When he set out to return, his strength suddenly failed him, and he felt his end was approaching. A fever had already got possession of him. He assembled his disciples, and announced to them that he was going: they, with passionate laments, deprecated such a calamity, as involving the exposure of his flock to the wolves. The Saint was moved, and used words which have become famous in the Church, "Lord, if I be yet necessary to Thy people, I decline not the labour; Thy will be done!" His wish was heard, not his prayer. His fever lay upon him; during the trial he continued his devotions as usual, causing himself to be laid in sackcloth and ashes. On his disciples asking to be allowed to place straw under him instead, he made answer, "Sons, it becomes a Christian to die in ashes. Did I set any other example, I should sin myself." They wished to turn him on his side, to ease his position; but he expressed a wish to see heaven rather than earth, that his spirit might, as it were, be setting out on its journey. It is said, that on this he saw the evil spirit at his side. "Beast

of blood," he exclaimed, "why standest thou here? Deadly one, thou shalt find nothing in me; Abraham's bosom is receiving me." With these words he died.

At this time, Sulpicius, his biographer, was away, apparently at Toulouse. One morning, a friend had just departed from him; he was sitting alone in his cell, thinking of the future and the past, of his sins, and the last judgment. "My limbs," he writes to the friend who had thus left him, "being wearied by the anguish of my mind, I laid them down on my bed, and, as is customary in sorrow, fell into a sleep,—the sleep of the morning hours, light and broken, and taking but wavering and doubtful possession of the limbs, when one seems, contrary to the nature of deep slumber, to be almost awake in one's sleep. Then suddenly I seem to myself to see holy Martin, the bishop, clad in a white robe, with face like a flame, eyes like stars, and glittering hair; and, while his person was what I had known it to be, yet, what can hardly be expressed, I could not look at him, though I could recognize him. He slightly smiled on me, and bore in his right hand the book which I had written of his life.

I embrace his sacred knees, and ask his blessing as usual; and I feel the soft touch of his hand on my head, while, together with the usual words of blessing, he repeats the name of the cross, familiar in his mouth: next, while I gaze upon him, and cannot take my fill of his face and look, suddenly he is caught aloft, till, after completing the immense spaces of the air, I following with my eyes the swift cloud that carried him, he is received into the open heaven, and can be seen no more. Not long after, I see the holy presbyter Clare, his disciple, who had lately died, ascending after his master. I, shameless one, desire to follow; while I set about it, and strain after lofty steps, I wake up, and, shaking off my sleep, begin to rejoice in the vision, when a boy, who was with me, enters sadder than usual, with a speaking and sorrowful countenance: 'Why so sad and eager to speak?' say I. 'Two monks,' he answers, 'are just come from Tours; they bring the news that Martin is departed.' I was overcome, I confess; my tears burst forth, I wept abundantly. Even now while I write, my brother, my tears are flowing, nor is any comfort adequate to this most unruly grief. However, when the news came, I felt a wish

that you should be partner in my grief, who were companion in my love. Come, then, to me at once, that we may mourn him together, whom we love together; although I am aware that such a man is not really to be mourned, who, after conquering and triumphing over the world, has at length received the crown of justice."—*Ep.* 2.

This letter is written to a private friend, at the time of St. Martin's death, as appears on the face of it; the memoirs of the Saint are written with equal earnestness and simplicity. They were circulated throughout Christendom with astonishing rapidity: but the miraculous accounts they contained were a difficulty with great numbers. Accordingly, in the last of his publications, Sulpicius gave the names of living witnesses in corroboration of his own statements. "Far be such suspicion," he adds, "from anyone who lives under God's eye; for Martin does not need support from fictions; however, I open before Thee, O Christ, the fidelity of my whole narrative, that I have neither said, nor will say, aught but what I have either seen myself, or have ascertained from plain authorities, or for the most part from his own mouth."—*Dial.* iii. 5.

Martin was buried at Tours, and two thousand of his monks attended the funeral. As has been said, he was more than eighty years old at the time of his death, out of which he had been bishop twenty-five. Some say that he died on a Sunday, at midnight. His festival is placed in the calendar on the 11th of November, the day either of his death, or of his burial. His relics were preserved in his episcopal city, till the latter days, when the Huguenots seized and burned them. Some portions, however, are said still to remain.

St. Martin, as I have several times said, is famous for his miraculous powers. He is even said to have raised the dead. He was persecuted by the Evil One, as St. Antony had been before him. One of these assaults has so deep an instruction in it, and is so apposite both to the foregoing narrative and to this age, that I shall close the volume with relating it:—

"While Martin was praying in his cell, the evil spirit stood before him, environed in a glittering radiance, by such pretence more easily to deceive him; clad also in royal robes, crowned with a golden and jewelled diadem, with shoes covered with gold, with serene face, and bright

looks, so as to seem nothing so little as what he was. Martin at first was dazzled at the sight; and for a long while both parties kept silence. At length the Evil One began:—'Acknowledge,' he says, 'O Martin, whom thou seest. I am Christ; I am now descending upon earth, and I wished first to manifest myself to thee.' Martin still kept silent, and returned no answer. The devil ventured to repeat his bold pretence. 'Martin, why hesitate in believing, when thou seest I am Christ?' Then he, understanding by revelation of the Spirit, that it was the Evil One and not God, answered, 'Jesus, the Lord, announced not that He should come in glittering clothing, and radiant with a diadem. I will not believe that Christ is come, save in that state and form in which He suffered, *save with the show of the wounds of the Cross.*' At these words the other vanished forthwith as smoke, and filled the cell with so horrible an odour as to leave indubitable proofs who he was. That this so took place, I know from the mouth of Martin himself, lest any one should think it fabulous."—*Vit. B. M.* 25.

The application of this vision to Martin's age is obvious; I suppose it means in this day, that

Christ comes not in pride of intellect, or reputation for philosophy. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying. Many spirits are abroad, more are issuing from the pit; the credentials which they display are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them with Martin in silence, and ask them for the print of the nails.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY EVENTS.

(The dates are, for the most part, according to Tillemont.)

A.D.

132. St. Justin converted, p. 171.
166. Flight of St. Polycarp from persecution, p. 231.
203. Origen begins to teach, p. 178.
211 (about). Tertullian writes his treatise against flight in persecution, p. 234.
250. Flight of St. Cyprian, St. Gregory of Neocæsarea, and St. Dionysius in the Dacian persecution, pp. 62, 231.
251. St. Antony born, pp. 178, 270; Novatian, schismatic, p. 133.
255. Manichæus, heretic, p. 252.
260. St. Dionysius, Pope, p. 74.
270. St. Antony adopts the solitary life, p. 179.
285. St. Antony retires into the desert, p. 185.
304. St. Macrina and her husband in the woods in Pontus, in the Diocletian persecution, p. 31.
305. St. Antony begins to have disciples, p. 208.
306. Meletian schism in Egypt, p. 216.
316. St. Martin born in Pannonia, p. 325.
320. The forty Martyrs of Sebaste in the Licinian persecution, p. 101.
325. The first General Council at Nicæa; Arius condemned, pp. 6, 8.
326. St. Athanasius made Bishop of Alexandria, pp. 4, 70, 270.
329. St. Gregory and St. Basil born, pp. 48, 90; Gregory, the father, made Bishop of Nazianzus, p. 90.
331. St. Martin enlisted in the army, p. 325.
335. Apollinaris teaches rhetoric, p. 158.
336. St. Martin leaves the army, p. 326.

A.D.
338. Eusebius of Nicomedia usurps the see of Constantinople, p. 132.
340 (about). St. Macrina, grandmother to St. Basil, dies, pp. 40, 67.
341. Macedonius usurps the see of Constantinople, p. 132.
347 (about). St. Chrysostom born, p. 178.
349. Basil, St. Basil's father, dies, p. 30; St. Emmelia and St. Macrina (junior) retire from the world, p. 31; Apollinaris put out of the Church by the Arians, p. 160.
350. St. Basil and St. Gregory at Athens, p. 91; St. Martin goes to St. Hilary, p. 324; St. Paul of Constantinople martyred by the Arians, p. 132.
354. St. Augustine born, p. 178; Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste, pp. 35, 56, 121, 167.
355. St. Antony supports St. Athanasius, p. 8; St. Basil leaves Athens, p. 93.
356. St. Gregory leaves Athens, p. 93; St. Antony dies, pp. 7, 223-4; St. Martin retires to Milan, p. 328; St. Hilary is banished to the East, p. 326, 328; St. Basil teaches rhetoric at Cæsarea, p. 100; writes to and about Apollinaris, pp. 167-8; retires from the world, pp. 6, 98.
357. Naucratius, St. Basil's brother, drowned, p. 31; St. Basil goes into the East, pp. 38, 67, 99; St. Athanasius writes in defence of his flight, p. 231.
358. St. Basil retires into Pontus, pp. 7, 100; his chants, pp. 107, 111, 114.
359. Council of Ariminum, pp. 6, 90.
360. St. Martin establishes his monastery at Poictiers, p. 328; Eudoxius usurps the see of Constantinople, p. 132; St. Basil separates from Dianius, p. 6; the monks of Nazianzus separate from St. Gregory's father, p. 90.
361. St. Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, pp. 83, 85; death of Constantius, p. 69.
362. St. Gregory ordained priest, pp. 123, 138; St. Basil returns to Cæsarea, and is ordained priest, p. 6; Council of Alexandria, p. 160; Macedonius, heresiarch, pp. 69, 132, 160.
363. Athanasius of Ancyra conforms, p. 56; Julian shuts up the Christian schools, pp. 159, 269.
364. St. Athanasius writes the life of St. Antony, pp. 176, 271; St. Gregory reconciles the monks of Nazianzus to his father, p. 90.

A.D.

366. St. Damasus made Pope, p. 73; St. Gregory reconciles St. Basil to his bishop, pp. 12, 114; the Eunomians, pp. 8, 13, 45, 133, 160.

367. St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, p. 165; persecution under Valens, pp. 9, 45.

369. Cæsarius dies, and St. Basil assists St. Gregory in securing his property, p. 114; Syrian Council against Apollinaris, pp. 8, 161.

370. Eudoxius, Arian Bishop of Constantinople, dies, p. 132; eighty Catholic clergy burnt at sea, pp. 133, 142; St. Basil raised to the see of Cæsarea, pp. 13, 115.

371. St. Basil writes to St. Athanasius, p. 70; he resists Valens and Modestus, p. 14, &c.; slandered by a monk of Nazianzus, p. 117; Patricius, Augustine's father, dies a Christian, p. 278.

372. St. Martin elected Bishop of Tours, p. 328; St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, p. 31; dispute between St. Basil and Anthimus, p. 120; St. Gregory made Bishop of Sasima, p. 123; complains of St. Basil, p. 125.

373. Augustine joins the Manichees, p. 252; St. Basil falls ill, p. 24; proposes to send St. Gregory of Nyssa to Rome, p. 78; St. Athanasius dies [al. A.D. 371], p. 163.

374. St. Gregory's father dies, p. 131; St. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, p. 22; Probus makes his speech to St. Ambrose, p. 293; St. Ambrose elected Bishop of Milan, p. 328; Marcellus, accused of Sabellianism, dies, pp. 79, 170.

375. St. Basil goes into Pisidia and Pontus, p. 28; enters a protest against Eustathius, p. 36; complains of St. Damasus, p. 78.

376. Demophilus, Arian Bishop of Constantinople, p. 134; Augustine teaches rhetoric at Carthage, p. 259; St. Epiphanius engaged on his work on heresies, p. 165.

377. St. Meletius and St. Eusebius in ill-esteem at Rome, pp. 26, 54, 72, 83; Apollinaris, heretic, p. 163; condemned at Rome, p. 164.

379. Death of St. Basil, pp. 48, 130; accession of Theodosius, p. 130; St. Gregory goes to Constantinople, *ibid.*; Priscillian begins his heresy, p. 339.

380. Theodosius declares for the Church, p. 130; St. Eusebius of Samosata killed by an Arian woman, p. 24; St. Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, p. 31.

A.D.

381. Priscillian made Bishop of Avila, p. 339; Second General Council held at Constantinople, pp. 130, 141, 164.
382. St. Gregory retires to Asia, pp. 132, 146; pronounces oration in praise of St. Basil, pp. 128, 131; passes Lent without speaking, p. 146.
383. Maximus assumes the purple; Gratian killed, p. 334; Augustine goes to Rome, pp. 252, 259.
384. St. Martin, at Treves, is courted by Maximus and his empress, p. 336, 7; Augustine goes to Milan, pp. 252, 260; Council of Bordeaux, p. 340; Priscillian, heretic, executed, p. 342.
386. St. Martin's second visit to Treves; he communicates with the Ithacians, p. 347, &c.; Augustine converted, p. 274, &c.
387. Augustine baptized by St. Ambrose, p. 279; St. Monica dies, p. 277.
388. St. Augustine settles at Thagaste, p. 279.
389. St. Gregory Nazianzen dies, p. 131; Ithacius deposed and banished, p. 343; St. Augustine ordained priest at Hippo, p. 281.
390. Persians come to Milan to see St. Ambrose, p. 293; Council of Milan against the Ithacians, p. 243.
392. Sulpicius Severus introduced to St. Martin, p. 325.
395. St. Augustine consecrated coadjutor to Valerius, p. 283.
396. Sulpicius writes the life of St. Martin, pp. 325, 353.
397. St. Martin dies, p. 351.
398. St. Augustine writes his Confessions, p. 256, &c.; Council of Turin, p. 343.
403. St. Chrysostom in persecution, p. 294.
405. Sulpicius writes his Dialogues, p. 353, &c.; Pelagius commences his heresy, p. 315.
410. Rome taken by Alaric, August 24th, p. 293.
411. St. Augustine writes to Proba, p. 294.
413. Demetrias devotes herself to religion, p. 301.
414. St. Jerome writes to Demetrias, p. 302; Pelagius writes to Demetrias, p. 316.
417. St. Augustine and St. Alypius write to Juliana, p. 316; Pope Zozimus for a while baffled by Pelagius, p. 315.
418. Sulpicius deceived by the Pelagians, p. 349.
420. St. Jerome dies, p. 302.
428. The Vandals cross to Africa, p. 228; St. Augustine writes to Honoratus, p. 238.

A.D.
430. Treatise of unknown author addressed to Demetrias, p. 321; the Vandals besiege Hippo, p. 247; death of St. Augustine, p. 249.
431. Third General Council, held at Ephesus, p. 229.
440. St. Leo elected Pope, p. 321.
455. Sack of Rome by Genseric, p. 322.
456 (about). Demetrias builds the church of St. Stephen, p. 322.

THE END.

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